

APRIL 1954

COMMENTARY

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Modernizing the Jewish Prayerbook

The Winners; The Pharmacist—Two Stories

T. S. Eliot's Latest Poetic Drama

The Lesson of Yalta

Four Poems

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Getting at the Facts Behind the Soviet Facade

HAL LEHRMAN

JAMES RORTY

LESLIE A. FIEDLER

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MEYER LIBEN

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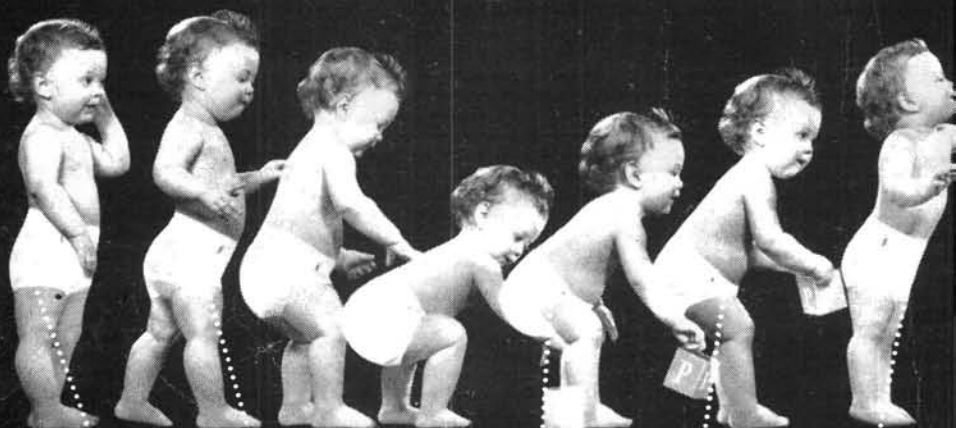
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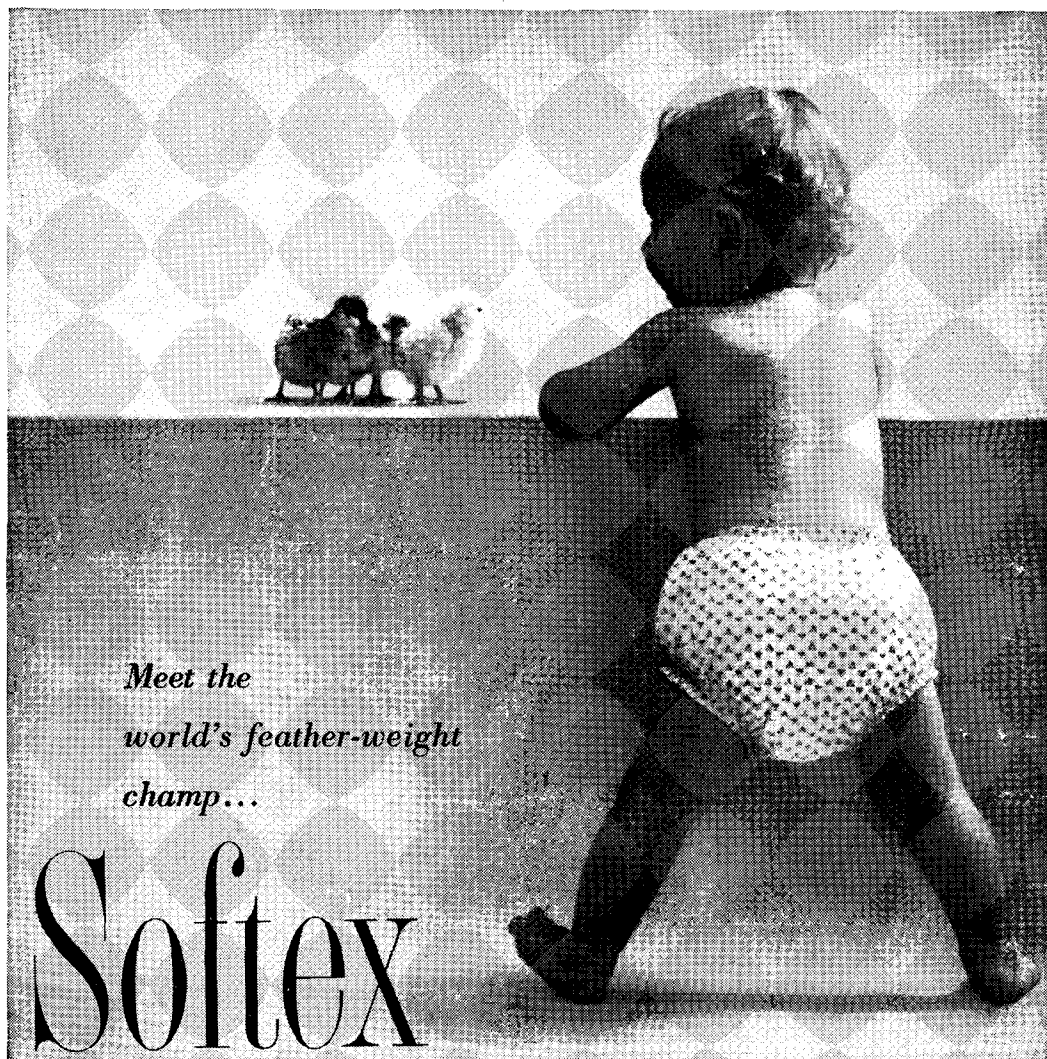
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In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture.

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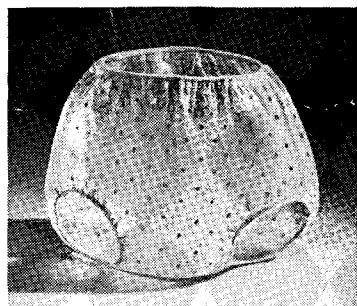
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COMMENTARY

APRIL 1954

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 4

Kibya, Jerusalem, and the River Jordan	<i>Hal Lehrman</i>	317
Thirty Days That Shook Norwalk	<i>James Rorty</i>	330
Seder in Rome	<i>Leslie A. Fiedler</i>	337
Our Welfare State and Our Political Parties	<i>Norman Thomas</i>	342
The Grandmother <i>A Poem</i>	<i>David Galler</i>	351
Modernizing the Jewish Prayerbook	<i>Theodor H. Gaster</i>	352
Eve of Holy Day <i>A Poem</i>	<i>Jacob Sloan</i>	360
The Winners; The Pharmacist <i>Two Stories</i>	<i>Meyer Liben</i>	361
T. S. Eliot's Latest Poetic Drama	<i>Spencer Brown</i>	367
In the House <i>A Poem</i>	<i>Leah Goldberg</i>	372
The Lesson of Yalta	<i>G. F. Hudson</i>	373
From the American Scene		
The Bakery Store Lady	<i>Sydney H. Kasper</i>	381
Cedars of Lebanon		
Why Sufferings Come Upon Man		386
She's Crazy and It Means Something <i>A Poem</i>	<i>Eli Siegel</i>	388
On the Horizon		
Belittling Sholom Aleichem's Jews	<i>Midge Decter</i>	389
The Study of Man		
Getting at the Facts Behind the Soviet Façade	<i>Franz Borkenau</i>	393
Letters from Readers		401
Books in Review		
Capitalism and the Historians, edited by F. A. Hayek	<i>H. Stuart Hughes</i>	407
Yisroel, edited by Joseph Leftwich	<i>Judd L. Teller</i>	411
A History of Psychoanalysis in America, by Clarence P. Oberndorf	<i>Lillian Blumberg McCall</i>	412
She Came to Stay, by Simone de Beauvoir	<i>William S. Poster</i>	417
Race, Jobs, and Politics: The Story of FEPC, by Louis Ruchames	<i>Herbert R. Northrup</i>	420
Miniatures of Early American Jews, by Hannah R. London	<i>Charles Reznikoff</i>	421

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF COMMENTARY

Isolationist France

Herbert Luethy

The core of the French nation — its small peasants and petty bourgeoisie — is today making a last stand against the modern industrial world. A subtle and mordant, yet sympathetic, description of a great country's state of mind.

They Chose Tyranny

Harold Lavine

Examining the personal histories of the twenty-one American prisoners of war who chose to remain with the Communists, Mr. Lavine seeks to discover what common factors of fate and personality led them to their extraordinary decision.

Ways to "Modernize" the Sabbath

Emanuel Rackman

An Orthodox rabbi traces the various methods by which authorities have sought to "save" the Sabbath for the modern Jew. He documents his view that only such changes will meet the need as grow organically out of the traditional concept of the Sabbath — and not those allowed, as has so often been the case, out of mere considerations of convenience.

The Myth of the German Military Caste

Solomon F. Bloom

The myth of the prowess at least, if not the political acumen, of the Prussian General Staff, is still extant, but never was there a hollower one, according to a specialist in modern European history, who shows that that General Staff shares large responsibility with Hitler and the junker politicians for the disasters that in this century have overtaken Germany, and the world.

An "American" in Paris

Michel Fougères

In June 1953 we published Mr. Fougères' "A Young Frenchman Discovers America," in which he expressed his enthusiasm for life in the United States. Now back in his native France, he finds himself more conscious than ever of what he sees as the constrictions of European life, as against the more expansive civilization of the New World.

Israel Five Years Later

Ernest Stock

In 1949, Mr. Stock says, visitors to Israel would be asked: "When are you coming to stay?" Now it is often: "What made you come?" Five years of history lie between these two questions.

How to Beg the Communist Question

Spencer Brown

A critic casts an analytic eye at the current literature in which embattled academicians, and others, celebrate the present blight on cultural freedom, and notes the devices by which they somehow omit considering the problem of Communist infiltration.

COMMENTARY

KIBYA, JERUSALEM, AND THE RIVER JORDAN

Exploring the Sources of U. S. — Israeli Misunderstanding

HAL LEHRMAN

FRESH outbreaks on the Israeli-Arab borders make close and cordial relations between Israel and the West more imperative than ever. Peace or war in the Levant may depend on Anglo-American ability to understand and act on Israel's grievances and on Israel's willingness to stay her hand because of faith in such ability. A survey of Israeli-Western misunderstandings in the recent past is therefore of vital, immediate interest.

Some months ago Israel appeared to be defying three hitherto fairly benevolent giants all at once; the great powers, by transferring her Foreign Office to "forbidden"

ISRAEL'S relations with the United States and the United Nations, except for a moderate recent upturn, have seemed to be deteriorating this past year, taking on a tone of truculence and mutual irritation; and along with this unhappy development, hope for the much desired early Arab-Israeli peace has been plunging downward. Just returned from his third visit to Israel, HAL LEHRMAN, who has had more experience than most American journalists in finding his way to the "unofficial" realities of Israeli politics, discusses here some of the sharper points of conflict, and the complexity of emotion, interest, and understanding at their roots. In a second article, Mr. Lehrman will analyze the more general political temper of which these particular incidents have been the expression, and will try to outline the future prospects for Israeli relations with the West, and for peace with the Arab states.

Jerusalem; the United Nations, by holding out for weeks against orders to stop work on a water-power project near the Syrian border; and world opinion, by ravaging an Arab village across the Jordan frontier called Kibya. The news of the latter adventure outraged even world *Jewish* opinion. A sign of the times was audience reaction to *The Juggler*, a Hollywood film about Israel. When Kirk Douglas drew a bead on an unsuspecting Arab patrol, a girl settler admonished him that "We don't shoot persons here in cold blood." Such scenes provoked hoots and whistles abroad this winter. In London major exhibitors decided not to run the film at all, judging their customers in no mood to accept fictional tributes to Israel.

Of course, it was not the first time Israel had talked back to someone bigger. But never before had she taken such harsh action on so many simultaneous fronts. And never before had the Israelis shown themselves so unremorseful. One may describe their attitude as sullen or as determined, according to one's point of departure. But it was certainly alarming, because of the near unanimity of the militant mood inside Israel and the further lengths to which it appeared ready to go, up to and including serious talk about an armed invasion of Jordan.

Since then, tension between Israel and the West has slackened. Israel and the United States particularly recognize that they agree on more matters than they disagree on. But the divergence on how to deal

with the Arabs—the problem at the heart of their previous differences—has not perceptibly diminished. This aspect becomes paramount again today with the renewal of frontier violence.

Neither the Anglo-American position nor the Israeli has been squarely presented. In Israel the “public relations” treatment of the various crises has been, not to mince words, deplorable. In the UN the Israeli delegation, led by Ambassador Abba Eban, has defended a difficult case eloquently but—by necessity—formally. Inhibitions have also censored the declarations of the great powers, particularly since each public syllable from them has had to be weighed for its effects on two opposing and prestige-conscious camps.

These repressions are less operative in private conversations with a writer gathering material for a personal report. Then views often emerge which, while perhaps inappropriate for public expression, give better insight into basic policies. Accordingly, I will set down as faithfully as I can how the recent controversies between Israel and the West are regarded, unofficially, by the people and foreign-policy makers of Israel, and by official Western representatives in their turn.

THE disturbed era in Israeli-West relations may be dated from Secretary of State John Foster Dulles’s tour of the Middle East last spring. According to the State Department, this trip should have been taken as proof of the new administration’s good will toward Israel. It was the first visit ever made to the Middle East by an American Secretary of State. It was undertaken, I have been assured, largely because Israel had frequently called attention to worsening conditions there and urged the United States to take remedial action. On his return, the Secretary had in fact begun to put into motion the machinery for ultimate solution of several prime problems; notably Jerusalem, Arab-Israeli water power, and the Jordan-Israel border. But then Israel elected to hurl a wrench into the works. This is the American story. It is a story that leaves Israelis looking blank. Dulles’s performance, they contend, served only to create the impression in the Arab mind that the United States was at last turning her face away from Israel. This was all the Arabs required to become more hostile and bellicose than ever. Moreover, the Arab impression

was not entirely wrong, according to the Israelis. Can there be much doubt, it is asked, that the Eisenhower administration seems inclined to go further than the Truman administration along the road towards Arab appeasement?

This painful contradiction in estimates becomes a violent contradiction in plain facts when one turns to the specific details of the conflicts that broke out after the Dulles visit. In each case, there is disagreement even over what happened, to say nothing of who was to blame. Consider, first, the case of Jerusalem.

IN ITS 1947 Partition resolution, the UN set the Holy City apart as a *corpus separatum*, not for the proposed Jewish or Arab state, but for the world. In the ensuing war, however, the world allowed Jerusalem to shift for itself, furnishing it with no protection or administration. Jordan, which held the Old City, had never accepted partition; the Israelis, who held the New City, considered their own acceptance of an internationalized Jerusalem nullified by UN failure and Jewish sacrifice. In 1948 and again in 1949 the General Assembly instructed, first the Palestine Conciliation Commission, then the Trusteeship Council, to get on with the writing of a special statute for Jerusalem. Nothing came of it except fleshless drafts and abortive compromise plans—rejected in a deadlocked Assembly, where neither the “internationalists” nor those willing to settle for UN supervision of limited areas around the Holy Places could collect enough votes for their conflicting solutions. Although the Assembly’s pious reaffirmation of the city’s international status in 1949 was never rescinded, efforts to carry it out lapsed.

Meanwhile life went on in divided Jerusalem. The two parties in possession tacitly endorsed each other’s sovereignty. Both scrupulously respected and protected the religious monuments within their *de facto* jurisdiction. On the Arab side, the military regime eventually developed into a civilian administration regularized by unilateral annexation, together with the remnants of Palestine east of the Israeli borders, into the Kingdom of Jordan. On the Jewish side, population and economy and government grew more and more cohesive with the rest of Israel, the possibility of severance becoming increasingly unthinkable. Early in 1950 this

process of fusion, despite Vatican displeasure and Arab League clamor, was unilaterally ratified by the Knesset proclamation that Jerusalem had actually been Israel's capital from the moment of her birth.

In the wholesale exodus of Israeli government agencies from Tel Aviv, one significant exception was the Foreign Ministry. A capital is scarcely a capital without a resident Foreign Ministry; but neither is a Foreign Ministry quite a Foreign Ministry without a resident diplomatic corps. Transfer of the latter to Jerusalem would have amounted to admitting that UN internationalization was as dead in the letter as in the spirit. This, the powers were not prepared to do. Consequently the Israeli cabinet kept its foreign policy center in Tel Aviv. The arrangement was physically cumbersome, requiring Ministry officials to shuttle interminably between the two cities for adequate liaison with their own government. It was also embarrassing, implying as it did that Israel did not have full authority in what she considered to be her own house. In May 1952, it was announced that the Foreign Ministry would shift to Jerusalem—presumably when housing for it shortly became available in the new Kirya (government compound) under construction there. Certain of the powers—including the United States and Britain—firmly indicated that they could not approve this decision or join the trek to Jerusalem for the time being. The Kirya buildings were nearly ready when Mr. Dulles arrived a year later and had a talk with Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett.

In a formal conference between the two statesmen and their staffs in May, Sharett ticked off all the outstanding problems in Israeli-American relations and Dulles replied systematically and at some length on every point—except Jerusalem. The Israeli participants concluded that Dulles wished to consult his advisors on this and bring it up when the conversation was resumed at a dinner party in the Sharett home that evening. And indeed Dulles did bring it up: "By the way, Mr. Sharett, you mentioned Jerusalem this afternoon." Israelis within earshot logically assumed, I am told, that the Secretary was now about to deliver his policy reply. Here is where the confusion begins. Dulles is then supposed to have said something like this: "You know, I'd be very glad if you

didn't move your Ministry to Jerusalem while I'm in this part of the world. It would embarrass me." Since Dulles was only going to be around in the Middle East for about a fortnight, Sharett was smilingly able to reply: "That's perfectly all right. We're not in that much of a hurry." Then Dulles added, in earnest tones: "I wonder if I might offer a bit of advice. When you move, it would be a good thing if you accompanied the move with a declaration that this in no way prejudices the Holy Places and that their status will remain unaffected." To which Sharett is said to have promptly replied: "Mr. Dulles, I think that is very sound advice—and we shall do it."

The Israelis contend that anyone hearing this exchange would have had to conclude that the U. S. was not going to be surprised or shocked by a Jerusalem transfer. On July 10, long after Dulles was safely home, Director-General Walter Eytan circulated a polite letter to all diplomatic missions announcing that the Foreign Ministry's newly completed offices would be occupied as of July 13. The letter expressly guaranteed no change in the status of the Holy Places and reaffirmed a standing pledge to agree and cooperate "if at any time the United Nations finds it necessary and practicable to institute an all-round international supervision" over them. This was a direct result of the Dulles-Sharett conversation, the Israelis maintain. Imagine their consternation when the Western missions, headed by the American Embassy, clamped a boycott on Jerusalem!

WESTERN sources contend that Dulles never retreated an inch from the previous American position: on the contrary, just before the Secretary's arrival, the American Ambassador had visited Sharett to re-emphasize the opposition of his own and other UN-member governments to the transfer of the Foreign Ministry. How then could Dulles have reversed the decision of a dozen countries between the fish and meat courses? All he had said, according to the Western version, was something to the effect that Sharett should please not move the capital while he, Dulles, was in the Middle East. The United States had never violated a UN decision and was not going to begin now, especially after having poured out so much blood in Korea to uphold the UN.

But Dulles, it is intimated, left Israel determined to help break the Jerusalem logjam. His reasoning was that Israel could hardly persuade the Arabs and the Catholic Church to accept any plan of hers. It was up to some outside power to seek a way out. The State Department was therefore put to work on this, and was making "some progress"—though I could learn nothing concrete about it—when suddenly along came the Eytan letter announcing that the Israeli Foreign Ministry would be open for business in Jerusalem three days later. Naturally, the United States had no choice except to stand firm against such arbitrary procedure.

But if the United States was making "some progress" on a Jerusalem settlement, why was it kept secret from the Israeli government? The Israelis are inclined to believe that nothing was being done at all. They interpret the American boycott as unfriendly and even mischievous, and the American stress on the UN as a transparent alibi. Before Dulles came, they recall, official Americans had no scruples about visiting the Foreign Minister if he happened to be in Jerusalem, despite the UN resolution. The United States was fully represented in the diplomatic gallery when President Itzhak Ben-Zvi was sworn in at the Knesset. Dulles himself called on Prime Minister Ben Gurion in Jerusalem. But since the Foreign Ministry moved, the Embassy has not only forbidden all official Americans to meet with official Israelis in Jerusalem—even socially—but brought pressure on other countries to stay away, extending the ban to such innocuous events as the "Conquest of the Desert" exposition. The Israelis assess this attitude as reflecting a desire on the part of Dulles and Eisenhower to appease, not the UN, but the Arabs.

Whatever the responsibility, all agree that the present situation is absurd. Israel is officially incommunicado from the West's representatives on her own soil, except for the Dutch and the Greeks (who always have had missions in Jerusalem). The only formal contact is through a solitary liaison officer established at the old Kirya in Tel Aviv merely as a relay runner for notes and messages. Because prestige is involved on both sides, an Israeli spokesman can talk with a Western spokesman only if they "happen" to meet at some private party outside Jerusalem, without publicity. This isolation—compelling

Israel to rely mainly on reports from her representatives overseas—is admittedly detrimental to all participants: Israel cannot present her own case on various issues to the diplomats sent to Israel to hear it; Israel's friends cannot help with advice or even express their own point of view. This condition is only partially relieved by a tendency lately for informal meetings at "private parties" to increase.

The British and other non-American diplomatic observers from the West who were not privy to the disputed Dulles-Sharet exchange seem to have been genuinely startled by the Foreign Ministry's "abrupt" transfer. As one envoy put it to me: "The Israelis should have first warned us to get up some resolution for the last General Assembly settling the problem of Jerusalem as a capital. If we had declined or failed, they could then have told us with good grace that they had no choice except to move. In that event, I feel we could have worked out a reasonable agreement. We might have accepted going up to Jerusalem one day a week, and they could have come down on another day, and so forth. But the Israelis weren't so tactful."

AFTER Jerusalem, B'not Ya'akov is another point on Israel's map which has lately stuck out like a sore thumb.

By itself, the B'not Ya'akov hydroelectric project would interest few except technicians. But the dispute over it is connected with more crucial matters, particularly the problems of sovereignty in demilitarized areas and of regional planning for maximum exploitation of Middle Eastern resources.

The Western view is that every country in the Levant would benefit much from efficient use of the region's irrigation and power resources. These resources are not contained within neat national boundaries, but spread across frontiers. They can be best made effective through regional planning and coordinated exploitation by Israel and her Arab neighbors. One glance at the lake and river systems in the area makes this obvious.

Israel, say American observers, agreed to the regional approach. In fact she urged the United States as late as last July to seek a regional water plan including the Jordan. American experts were at work drawing up such a plan (ultimately brought out to the Middle East last fall by Eric Johnston as

President Eisenhower's personal representative). But despite this, Israel on September 2, without previous notice or consultation, began digging a large canal from B'not Ya'akov, in the demilitarized zone on the Israeli-Syrian frontier, to Lake Tiberias, diverting water from the Jordan river for Israel's exclusive advantage.

If the Israelis really meant what they said about common planning, the Americans think, the best way to demonstrate it was certainly not by taking water out of the Jordan for themselves. Even if—as the Israelis pointed out—that part of the Jordan was in their territory, they could hardly go ahead on their own while pleading for co-operative organization. The only result was to antagonize the Arabs further against any water plan involving Israel.

United States and United Nations representatives in the field when I arrived, shortly after the B'not Ya'akov dispute flared, were especially annoyed by what they felt was either irresponsibility or deceit in the sudden Israeli move. There had been no entry for the project in the Israeli budget, they said. Nobody in the Israeli government knew, or seemed to know, when endorsing regional cooperation in July, that independent Israeli operations would begin in September. The office of our Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) in Tel Aviv, which has a prime interest in Israeli water programs, received no intimation that the Jordan works were to be started in the fiscal year. It was not until September 4, two days after ground was broken, that any non-Israeli authority knew work had begun. No hint of the project's real scope was given when Israel asked the UN's acting chairman of the Syrian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission (MAC), an American colonel, whether he had any objections to it. He answered orally that he did not, provided no private rights were infringed. It took a few days, and the arrival of "more and more bulldozers" and other heavy equipment, before he could appreciate the implications and fully advise Danish Major General Vagn Bennike, chief of staff of the UN's Truce Supervision Organization. The Syrians, for the same reason, were also slow in catching on, I was told, which accounted for the delay in their protesting to General Bennike that Israel was violating the demilitarized zone agreement.

THIS 1949 agreement had secured withdrawal of Syrian troops from a sector on the west bank of the Jordan occupied by them during the Arab-Israeli war. According to the armistice terms, negotiated with the aid of UN Mediator Ralph J. Bunche, "no military or political advantage should be gained" in the zone by either side under the Security Council truce. The zone's purpose was solely to separate the two armies so "as to minimize the possibility of friction and incident, while providing for the gradual restoration of normal civilian life in the area . . . without prejudice to the ultimate settlement" in a peace treaty to be finally drawn up. Zonal administration, it was understood in a letter of clarification at the time from Dr. Bunche, was to be "under the general supervision of the chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission."

The Syrians now charged that the canal would enable Israel to reduce at will the depth of the Jordan, thus nullifying the purpose of the demilitarized zone as a natural barrier, especially against motorized invading forces. The Syrians alleged further that the diggings disturbed "normal civilian life" by partially flooding an Arab-owned island and damaging other Arab property. (The Israelis deny Arab ownership of the strip of land involved; if so, the Syrians asked, why did the Israelis offer to buy the strip a few years ago?) Damascus also complained that the diggings caused Arab-owned water mills to shut down, threatened the operation of others, and would reduce the water supply of adjacent Arab farm lands.

Upon preliminary inquiry, Bennike felt he had found enough presumption of truth in these claims to order a halt on the project until a settlement could be reached. Israel refused, despite the clear right of the MAC chairman to intervene. On further investigation, the UN chief of staff decided that the project would create even greater disturbance to "normal civilian life" unless Israel undertook "definite obligations" to avoid them. The Israelis persisted in their defiance even after the matter had been referred to the Security Council. It was only when Secretary Dulles announced the withholding of American grant-in-aid that she was finally forced to yield. Her entire performance, in the American view, was a willful flouting of international pledges and obligations.

ISRAELI spokesmen deny each item in this bill. They begin by taking apart the charge that Israel had first asked the Americans to develop an area water plan, then tried to sabotage it by unilateral action. It is true that Israel in July urged the regional approach on the United States. But in what context? Washington had then been nursing a scheme for the Yarmuk river, which rises in Arab territory but borders and cuts into Israel before joining the Jordan. Under the American plan the Yarmuk would have been exploited solely for Arab benefit. We Israelis had objected that this Yarmuk program was inequitable, and said we preferred a truly regional program that would distribute the Yarmuk's as well as the Jordan's resources to all contiguous countries and also include the Lebanon's Litani river, which would contribute nearly 60 per cent of the water available for any proper regional plan but now runs to waste. In any case, we Israelis had pleaded, there ought to be a clear decision: either a genuine regional plan, or none at all—in which latter event nobody could rightly object to our developing our Jordan resources in a manner helpful to us and harmless to others.

To this proposal the Americans, it seems, had made no rejoinder whatsoever. Our suggestions, the Israelis say, drew an absolute blank. How, then, could the Americans expect us to feel committed to a principle they had not accepted? Actually, the Americans went on to scrap the Yarmuk plan after all—but they didn't bother to tell us. And they began their own plan, again without telling us—though we were discussing water with them constantly. We knew nothing about Washington's intentions until the plan was divulged to the press—after we had inaugurated B'not Ya'akov.*

The B'not Ya'akov project contains no mysteries or surprises, the Israelis declare. We had been openly discussing it for years before its inception. We even put it on

display at the "Conquest of the Desert" show. As for B'not Ya'akov's damage to Arab interests, this is pure imagination, say the Israelis. Property owned by Arabs was carefully avoided in the digging operations; a preferred site was abandoned in order to do so. Firm assurances were given that the full volume of Jordan water previously utilized by Arab landowners would be available. The Arab-owned island allegedly flooded is under water every winter, has never been cultivated, is not owned by any Arab, and has not been flooded. The Syrians, in many talks with the Israelis, had never before claimed that mills on the Jordan's east bank used Jordan water. The mills supposedly cut off by the diggings had ceased to function several years earlier. They actually stand *above* the proposed canal.

Syria had no right to raise the question of "military advantage," which referred in the armistice only to the truce prior to that armistice. Whether a canal was dug or not, no troops could be in the demilitarized zone so long as the zonal agreement remained in force. Actually, the more canals and other obstructions, the more difficult any troop movements from either side.

IF ANY private rights were being jeopardized, they were *Israeli* rights, held under a legal 1926 concession to the Palestine Electric Corporation, reaffirmed under the Syrian armistice, and now infringed by cessation of operations. Add also the private rights of the Israeli people in general, needlessly restrained from obtaining cheap and vital electric power for their farms, factories, and homes.

No UN opposition arose until the Syrian government began making "baseless" objections—in line with "its established practice" of harassment—and threats of violence which impelled UN representatives on the ground to reverse their earlier approval for the project. For topographical reasons, the utmost development of Syrian lands beyond the

*The plan presented by Eric Johnston was written by the Boston engineering firm of Charles T. Main for the Tennessee Valley Authority, the latter having taken over the project at the request of the UN's Palestine refugee relief agency, UNRWA. The Boston consultants, who made no visit to the area they were planning for, described their product as a "desk study." Israelis complain that it ignores the latest and best research.

The B'not Ya'akov project, they claim, will produce more power at less expense. Informally, however, their chief objection to the over-all TVA proposal is that it does not squarely face up to the political problems of the area, but, according to the Israelis, panders to Arab belligerence. Israel nevertheless has not rejected the plan, and now is studying it officially.

Jordan could not possibly utilize more than two per cent of the river's flow. Hence the real Syrian motive is not development of Syria, but obstruction of Israel. The fact that the disputed zone has been demilitarized does not make any part of it Syrian. The whole area lies on the Israeli side of the international border. As a matter of fact, the Jordan nowhere touches Syrian territory. The only purpose of demilitarization was to "separate" the two armies and bar military or para-military forces. True, the question of "sovereignty" was not "raised" in the armistice. But, not having been raised, it cannot be "suspended," and therefore stays where it was—with Israel. True also, Syrian troops evacuated the zone voluntarily—but didn't we pull *our* troops back from the Lebanon and from deep in Egypt? We don't interfere there; why should we tolerate Arab interference with our sovereignty here? As for the UN, we did not resist its jurisdiction. Bennike never indicated whom he wanted Israel to agree with. Sharett had offered, verbally and in writing, to stop work pending an agreement with Bennike—but *not* with Syria, who had no right to intervene.

Moreover, Mediator Bunche, speaking for the UN, had given us assurances that the demilitarized zone would not be kept "a vacuum or wasteland." Acceptance of Syria's claim to a veto over economic projects would condemn Israel to economic stagnation. "Restoration of normal civilian life," as prescribed in Article V of the armistice, may mean apathy for the Syrians, but to us it means action. Indeed the UN itself had previously concurred in major Israeli development programs inside the demilitarized zone. These had built settlements and roads, recovered waste territory, deepened and straightened the Jordan river bed, and even altered its course. B'not Ya'akov takes nothing from the Syrians. It does not consume water for irrigation. It merely diverts water into a canal to obtain hydroelectric power from a precipitate drop in water level between Lakes Huleh and Tiberias. Then all the water is sluiced back into the Jordan. Nowhere else in the whole region can electricity be created so inexpensively. Yet it was against so progressive and constructive an intention that Dulles found it necessary to swing so mighty a sledge hammer as the suspension of America's entire aid program to Israel!

TODAY the hurt on both sides of the bitter B'not Ya'akov argument has quieted. Israel received fair treatment at the Security Council. The United States and Britain worked well and earnestly there for a resolution which would avoid taking sides on the issue but authorize General Bennike to try reconciling Israeli and local interests by further study, and take any steps he considered necessary, including permission to resume the B'not Ya'akov work. Syria resisted on grounds that she was entitled to a veto over any Bennike decision in Israel's favor. The Soviets, eternally stirring the Levantine waters, obligingly vetoed the UN proposal. Israel might have treated the resolution as vindication of her resistance to Syrian meddling, and the Security Council's failure as a green light to resume work. Instead, she has offered in effect to cooperate with General Bennike as if the resolution to re-investigate had been passed.

Mr. Dulles's deliberate delay in making available a first 26 million dollar slice of 1953-54 grant-in-aid to Israel is now seen by neutral observers as a major American diplomatic boner.

At the time Washington denied that the Big Stick of economic assistance was being brandished to force political docility. Our record shows, I was told at our Tel Aviv Embassy, that we do not offer aid in order to "buy" satellites: U.S. aid is premised on the supposition that the recipient will cooperate with us and other countries for peace. But peace would not have been encouraged, said the Americans, by rewarding Israel at the precise moment when she was resisting a legitimate UN request.

It appeared to the Israelis, however, that the State Department, which treated Arab sensibilities so gingerly, seemed to show much less concern for Jewish feelings. (Egypt had been defying the Security Council for two years over Suez—without losing American aid.) To many in a country filled with people harried by memories of persecution, the crude and unprecedented American move inevitably appeared as an outright act of discrimination with anti-Semitic overtones. To nearly everyone else in Israel it looked, at least, like the act of a bully. It needlessly dissipated much good will for the United States. It was widely interpreted, not as an American prop for the UN, but as

just another American overture to the Arabs. And it aroused resentment among *other* small and middling states inside and outside the UN: if the Americans can do this to Israel today, they can try the same tomorrow on *us*. American economic aid had been suspended in certain areas before for pressure purposes. But only on strictly internal economic grounds directly pertinent to the aid program, never as intervention in a recipient's foreign policy.

Conversely, Israel's behavior over B'not Ya'akov seemed to fall short of inspired statesmanship. Her Foreign Ministry had haggled with the UN's representative for weeks after his first request to halt the digging. In the end—so it looked to the outside world—she had had to be bludgeoned into obeying a reasonable order. How much better, cooler heads asked, if Israel had firmly gone on record at the outset as disagreeing with Bennike—and then had consented to cease operations pending her own appeal to the Security Council? This would have brought her into the UN hearings as the aggrieved party, with dignity and with clean hands.

The one useful aspect of the dispute was its reminder of the dangers in permanent reliance on makeshift agreements. The Israeli-Syrian armistice terms on evacuation of Arab troops and subsequent demilitarization had been kept deliberately vague. The only considerations at the time were military. Both sides—and Dr. Bunche—had conspired not to dot the *i*'s on matters of sovereignty and jurisdiction in the contested area. They knew that otherwise no armistice would be reached. The outcome had been a masterpiece of conciliation and confusion—each side free to interpret the fuzzy language to suit itself. In the continued absence of a treaty, the postponed issues were now cropping up to plague Israel and Syria—and the UN.

There was another inadequate armistice, on another Israeli frontier, where the peril was even greater—because blood was flowing there, not just water. For lack of a peace treaty, Jordan's border with Israel had brought forth the "Kibya Affair."

HERE again official Americans see the pacification efforts of U.S. diplomacy frustrated by Israeli hot-headedness.

According to this view, Mr. Dulles was

so aware of the dangerous situation created by Jordan-Israeli border raids that he personally addressed himself to it while he was in the Middle East. When he appealed to Jordan Premier Fawzi Mulki to arrange talks with Israel, the latter suggested reinstatement of the Local Commanders' Agreement (a system which facilitated liaison between opposite numbers on the spot in restraint of border violators, and which Israel had denounced the previous January because of alleged infringement by Jordan). Dulles wrote to Ben Gurion urging that he take the first step to put the Agreement back into effect. The Prime Minister complied, and in early June it was restored, to immediate good effect. September was the quietest month in the Jordan-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission's history. When an admittedly serious assault on Israeli territory occurred in early October, causing three Jewish deaths, Jordan permitted Israeli search across her border for the culprits, pressed an energetic investigation of her own under personal direction of Arab Legion Chief of Staff Glubb Pasha himself, and pleaded with the Israelis not to retaliate.

Notwithstanding these evidences of Jordan's good faith, the critics of Israel continue, Israeli armed forces two nights later, on October 14, attacked the undefended village of Kibya, across the line from Lydda, destroying some forty houses and killing over fifty civilians, most of them women and children. This act was especially wanton because committed at a moment when prospects were excellent for improvement of the border situation about which Israel had been complaining so loudly. With the Jordanians—and the entire Arab world—crying for revenge, the border now stood more embattled and venomous than ever. As for the rest of the indignant world, it would not have accepted less than the denunciation of Israel which Britain and the United States immediately made, and the collective condemnation of her as an aggressor voted after a full November hearing in the Security Council.

To this flat censure, the Israelis respond with a point-by-point refutation. They concede only that the death of innocent non-combatants at Kibya was deplorable. They do not admit that Israeli troops were responsible. They deny that the restored Local Commanders' Agreement induced any gen-

uine pacification. There had been nine Israelis killed, seven injured, and one kidnapped in July and August, and six "incidents" in the "quiet month" of September. They deny that any satisfaction could have been expected from Jordan's investigation of the latest crime against an Israeli village. They deny that the over-all problem of border violation was even remotely approaching a solution when the Kibya incident occurred. They believe that the Security Council's condemnation of Israel, without equal condemnation of earlier Jordan outrages—and without summoning the Arabs to negotiate a final peace settlement—was tantamount to encouraging the Arabs to continue a state of war against Israel.

In the first shock of the news from Kibya, friends of Israel abroad clutched at extenuating circumstances in the events immediately preceding it to explain—if not justify—the attack. Ten days before Kibya, marauders had fired on a crowded passenger bus near Lydda. Two days later they had attacked a Haifa-Tel Aviv passenger train. Two nights before Kibya, in Moshav Yahud on the Lydda-Tel Aviv road, a young mother, her small daughter, and her baby son had been murdered by a hand-grenade tossed into the room where they and five others lay sleeping.

But these crimes were not the vindication on which the Israeli rejoinder relied. Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett's reply, on October 22, to an October 16 British communiqué flaying Israel, stated that the Kibya affair was being taken out of context: it had to be examined, not in isolation, but as one more incident in a long history of frontier violence of which Israel had been by far the greater victim. Arab marauding was not, as piously pictured, the understandable little bursts of spleen from dispossessed Palestinian refugees seeking recovery of what had once been theirs, or vengeance for its loss. It was an organized, para-military program of sabotage, espionage, and terror, with the aid of the Jordan police and even of the British-commanded Arab Legion—and with the aid of the ineffective UN machinery ostensibly designed to curb it.

LOOK at the statistics, the Israelis said. The Mixed Armistice Commission itself had confirmed no less than 1,208 illegal border crossings from Jordan between January and

September just prior to Kibya. In the preceding twelve months there had been 3,742 such incursions—inflicting an estimated direct economic loss on Israel of more than two and a half million dollars. Marauders tore up sections of precious irrigation piping, drove off livestock, cut electric power lines, dynamited railway tracks, ravaged orchards, groves, and woods, set fire to houses, stole seed, fertilizer, tools, and farm equipment. Since May 1950—when Britain, France, and the U. S. "guaranteed" the borders of Israel—there had been 3,263 thefts and burglaries, 122 armed robberies, 866 clashes with armed infiltrators on Israeli soil—and 421 Israelis killed or wounded.

Were they less dead, simply because they had been killed a few at a time, than those Arabs who had died all at once at Kibya? Was the Kibya attack more of an "atrociousness" because it had lasted hours instead of years?

Some of the border raids could indeed be the desperate acts of individual Arab peasants. But it would require invincible indifference to facts, the Israelis maintained, to blink away the evidence that many of the raids revealed planning, direction, and controlled purpose. Would hungry Arabs commandeer Jordanian tanks and lay a barrage down over an Israeli highway? Would destitute refugees set mines capable of blowing up 250 yards of track and derailing a locomotive and thirteen freight cars? Would homeless *fellahin* attack communication lines at all, rather than pilfer chickens? Would they steal Sten guns and rifles from Jordan arsenals just to shoot at Israeli jeeps—or would they aim at army vehicles rather than at sheep?

There were cases in MAC files of Arab operations carried out with split-second precision. As example, a senior Israeli Army officer described to me an attack on a Jewish outpost in the Judean hills. The objective was an outpost held by two sentries. The assailants moved up without detection. Previous reconnoitering had established the exact moment when the guard was changed. The infiltrators held their fire until the relief sentries arrived—when all four men were simultaneously exposed for an instant. As soon as shooting commenced at close range against this visible target, another enemy group opened diversionary fire on the main Israeli camp. As the two attacking groups

swiftly withdrew, covering fire from a third group held off the pursuers. It was a highly synchronized and perfectly executed military operation involving three distinct units—hardly the work of amateurs. On other occasions, the bodies of individual Israeli soldiers killed in ambush had been divested only of documents giving their identity numbers and units—a clue to defensive battle strength in the area. Israeli encampments had been penetrated at night for the sole apparent motive of jimmying desk drawers and taking papers possibly useful to military intelligence—without anything else being stolen. Pass books and papers are not edible: would a simple refugee break into an army office instead of an army kitchen or supply depot?

KIBYA, according to my Israeli informants, was not just a somnolent village. MAC archives show that the tracks of participants in several raids led back to Kibya. Jordan told us through MAC, the Israelis say, that she wanted the frontier quiet but didn't know where to look for raiders. We thereupon produced a list of their names—including some inhabitants of Kibya. But Jordan did nothing about it.

The relatively well-disciplined Arab Legion, which had previously patrolled the border, was reportedly replaced at the beginning of 1953 by a so-called National Guard—largely recruited from the frontier villages. This force stimulated rather than prevented incursions. Israelis claim cause to believe that it has supplied arms to raiders, furnished protective fire at moments of withdrawal, and even taken a cut of the occasional loot.

The Arab Legion, it is charged, was also directly involved at times. In several instances, direct proof has been allegedly obtained. A document signed by a Jordan intelligence officer and found on the body of a marauder killed in Israeli territory read in Arabic: "To whom it may concern—the bearer of this permit, Mahmud Sulaiman, from Nablus, is on special duty. Please do not stop him." Two raiders captured in another clash reportedly admitted that they belonged to the National Guard, and had been sent across the line by the Legion for sabotage and espionage. Such disclosures, the Israelis contend, further expose the

hypocritical professions of the Legion that it is powerless to hold back "a million desperate refugees." Israeli defense forces cannot guard every yard of the 330-mile Jordan frontier—but the Legion, knowing every infiltrator and every loophole, could cork the border up overnight, if the will to do so existed.

Nor do the Israelis—informally—absolve Britain herself of hypocritical involvement, especially in the light of London's virtuous outcry against the "barbarism" of Kibya. For Israelis, the Legion is patently a British creature—drilled, officered, and financed from Britain. It is a preposterous fiction that Glubb Pasha and his colleague, who have ostensibly surrendered their British nationality, scrupulously refrain from serving what they consider to be Britain's interests. That they go further, and obey Britain's orders, is suggested by the consternation in the Tel Aviv British Embassy one day when a high-level Israeli rumor circulated that the Legion would breach the armistice that night by attacking the UN-inviolable Israeli guard on Mount Scopus. At an emergency meeting of diplomats to consider the grave threat, the British Ambassador, betraying much distress, is reliably reported to have expostulated that Glubb Pasha simply can't do this, you know—it's not according to plan!

Instead of controlling the frontier, the Israelis assert, Jordan authorities deny complicity in the raids and are not above destroying evidence of such attacks or even manufacturing evidence to the contrary. In one instance, the body of a murdered Israeli soldier was carried nearly a mile toward Jordan territory in an effort to "prove" Israel the aggressor; to delay MAC investigators long enough to arrange this, shots had been fired at them, as a later MAC resolution censuring Jordan testified. In another case, Israel was accused of attacking the Jordan village of Beit Ikksa; native authorities showed MAC representatives "human" bloodstains that were later demonstrated to be cow's blood. After Kibya, Jordan allegedly invented—for propaganda effect—two more Israeli "raids," both of them announced in Jordan press releases but never presented to MAC.

Jordan's desire to reduce illegal border crossings by Arab refugees is belied, the Israelis say, by her rejection of offers to rectify the border, even in the refugees' favor. When

attempts of inhabitants of Qalqiliya to till their former farms caused frontier tension, Israel proposed giving Jordan fertile land in the Qalqiliya area in return for *uncultivated* land south of the Dead Sea. During similar tension around Latrun, Israel suggested a land barter which would have given Jordan 5,000 dunams more than Israel. When two mistakes—one for each side—were detected in the armistice line near Zeita, Israel volunteered to recognize the *de facto* situation and alter the maps in order to avoid more land-exchange disputes or splitting of Arab families. In the first and third of the above, Jordan first agreed, then reneged. In the second, she refused outright.

Two days after Kibya, Israel filed with General Bennike a list of "some of the cases" in which specific information had been delivered to Jordan to help her accomplish "her task in fighting against infiltration from Jordan"—these cases had also been aired in official Israeli complaints at MAC meetings. Some sample items: a known border smuggler recruited into the National Guard; a lieutenant who had stolen Israeli crops; fourteen raiders returned by Israel to Jordan a few days before most of them were recaptured in Israel; two Bedouin assassins in Jordan custody known to have killed an Israeli Bedouin but later permitted to escape. In no instance, General Bennike was advised, had Jordan taken any action or MAC been able to secure it.

THE General himself, in the Israeli view, exhibited naivety, if nothing worse, in accepting Jordan's pledges that the Yahud killers would be hunted and punished. His "one-sided" report on Kibya to the Security Council—particularly his assertion that Israel occasionally hampered the movements of UN observers—caused great indignation in Israel. Israelis now recall with nostalgia Bennike's predecessor, American Lieutenant General W. E. Riley, who was able by a combination of firmness and cajolery to quiet threatening situations and keep tension at a minimum after each fresh outbreak. He was largely responsible for the first meetings up and down the border between local commanders, some of whom had direct telephone lines to one another for instant consultation on trouble in their sectors.

But not all UN personnel were as im-

partial as Riley, Israelis feel. They remember notably a Belgian, Colonel Bennet de Ridder, who, when confronted with the bloodstains of several murdered Israeli guards, quipped that for all he knew it might be donkey's blood! Too many UN observers, it is suggested, fall for the traditional Arab charm and the picturesque Oriental indirectness, contrasted with which the blunt and brisk Israeli manner sometimes appears to be overbearing. Besides, at the time of Kibya there were only nineteen UN military observers available to "supervise" Israel's frontiers with Syria, the Lebanon, and Egypt, as well as Jordan. They were overworked, under-equipped, and somewhat at sea in the confusion. Under such circumstances, it seemed futile to expect swift action in determining guilt and achieving justice.

The solution, nevertheless, does not lie in mere reinforcement of the Observer Corps, which was proposed during Security Council hearings. As a matter of fact, Israelis argue, this would be a step backward, toward the primitive Truce machinery which preceded the armistices. Those armistices, with Jordan and other Arab belligerents, provided for the Mixed Commissions composed of one delegate from each side and a UN chairman to cast the deciding vote in event of tie.

They were designed to fix responsibility for violations and exert pressure for remedial action and punishment of culprits. They did some good in the early days, but have long since lost every function except to serve as "statistical bureaus" for the recording of violence. Scarcely a month before Kibya, the MAC agenda was so overloaded that it was agreed to "wipe out" 338 pending cases without investigation. And if a MAC decision does declare Jordan guilty in any incident, the Israelis cry, it no longer helps prevent further incidents—and certainly does not restore our dead to life.

What needs to be done now, they insist, is to move to the next phase envisaged in the armistice with Jordan: negotiation of a peace treaty. Bennike himself admitted to the Security Council that "the Armistice agreements have lasted too long not to have lost part of their effectiveness." But they have endured "too long" only because Jordan, profiting from Israeli economic disorder and the military strain induced by border law-

lessness, has refused to make the peace which the armistice prescribes.

Israel cannot agree to being permanently saddled with a MAC which was meant to be only an interim organ. That is why Israel welcomed the UN inquiry into Kibya. She hoped that not just Kibya but its context and causes would be put under scrutiny. She demanded, in fact, that priority be given to the "main objective" of the armistice—the "transition to permanent peace"—which Jordan had consistently flaunted despite previous UN injunctions.

Here, as the Israelis saw it, was a matchless opportunity for the Security Council. But its resolution censuring Israel passed over Jordan's "murders" in silence, failing, as Ben Gurion noted with "amazement," to call for a peace parley, let alone take measures to compel one. Israel saw herself left with no alternative but to affirm her sacred duty, by "all legitimate measures in our power, to insure that Jewish lives, too, shall not be left unprotected." In the end, desperately, she asked that, if the Jordanians rejected a formal peace, they should at least be required to confer on making the armistice itself work adequately—but this too failed because of Jordan's intransigence.

ANGLO-AMERICAN diplomatic circles and UN professionals in the area find this Israeli analysis of the Jordan border problem a shade too righteous and black-and-white. While conceding that all would indeed be well if Jordan were somehow persuaded to sign the peace, they reject Israel's assumption that innocence and injury are concentrated on her side, and that the West needs only to hammer the Arabs down in order to set everything right.

They suggest that Israel tends to exaggerate the military nature of the Arab infiltrations, minimize their spontaneity, and forget all about her own armistice violations. UN technical experts inspecting Arab sabotage on rail and other installations usually find it amateurish. Invariably, it is said, the wreckers have used the wrong kind of explosive, or picked the wrong section of rail to blow up, or damaged a water pipe so feebly that repairs can be finished in a few hours. There really are homeless and angry borderland Palestine refugees. They do live crowded and hungry, able daily from their

hovels to see the rich fields and tidy Israeli homesteads beyond the line. They do cross over to get food from land they think they still own or to take revenge on those who own it now. And the Israelis cross over too, not always by mistake or in pursuit of Arab attackers.

Both sides are engaged with equal fury in the *fassad*, the "blood feud," it is insisted. Israeli dead with military equipment have been found in Jordan without having been carried there. If the total of Israeli casualties since the 1950 Tripartite Declaration is 421, Jordan's for the same period is 527. And these figures relate only to Israeli territory. Nothing can be demonstrated from such statistics, especially since the Arabs do not keep records of total casualties on *their* side of the line. In the MAC's inquiries into complaint and counter-complaint during four years, according to the Bennike report, it has condemned Jordan 50 times for violations of various armistice provisions—but it has also condemned Israel 63 times!

Israelis lack a sense of proportion, some onlookers declare. If an Arab should chance to wander into Israel after his stray cows and get himself shot, the Israeli press righteously announces another "repulsed raid." But if an Israeli wandering into Jordan is picked off, the newspapers scream murder and—as a UN observer long enough in Israel to acquire some local jargon expressed it—"the whole bloody country sits *shiva*." The fact is that the atmosphere is too frenzied and the straggling frontier is too long and vague, for control to be effective. If the skilled and mechanized Israeli Army admits its inability to seal the border, why expect the Jordan National Guard or the Arab Legion (or the faraway British) to do it?

A UN observer's lot is not a happy one, I was assured. As soon as he seems to be deciding in favor of one side, the unfortunate UN man is bombarded with accusations of bias from the other. Invariably, the Israeli outcry is shriller, the roar of innocence more deafening—a factor, the UN people admit, which can become irritating: "After all, we're only human." They have the impression, too, that Arab incursions across the border are in general individual or poorly planned enterprises, whereas Israeli violations seem mainly deliberate and part of an organized pattern—semi-official, one might say

—and therefore more compromising. Both sides, it is noted with some asperity, “protest too much” about MAC’s alleged uselessness: “Jordan or Israel will sulk, and mutter about ‘boycotting’ us—but as soon as a new incident flares up, the side that thinks it has a case starts screaming for an *immediate* investigation.” The truth is, according to UN operatives, that MAC is a safety-valve. Without it, the border would long since have exploded. Of course the armistices have lost some effectiveness, but, as Bennike also informed the Security Council, “they still constitute a barrier to breaches of the peace.”

And it is obtuse of the Israelis to pretend that Kibya was merely another incident, their critics say, or that it was a justified punitive expedition. Proof that the place was defenseless is clear from the later tumult in Arab territory: the scared inhabitants of Nablus, Ramallah, Hebron, and Jericho demonstrated and went on strike, demanding more protection for themselves and a clean-up of the Arab Legion, which had failed to save Kibya. The Jordan government had to demote or dismiss a number of its security officials. Kibya was different because of its frightful death toll and the shockingly calculated planning. The world had to take an unequivocal stand. It was hardly the occasion, as the Israelis insist, to call on the bereaved, enraged Arabs to make peace. If the Security Council had not rendered moral satisfaction to them through its forthright, unqualified denunciation of Israel, the Arabs would have had good cause to denounce the Security Council instead—and then the prospects for border peace would have become more remote than ever.

LOOKING back today on Kibya, one thing alone is evident beyond dispute: that it did do vast damage to Israel’s reputation abroad. Apart from humanitarian considerations Kibya was, at the least, a blunder of great political magnitude. If it is true that Israel’s most precious asset is the sympathy of the free world, then Kibya can have no defense, no apologia, even on the level of practical politics and plain survival.

But such a judgment does not resolve the more intimate and immediate issue in the narrower physical framework of the Middle East itself—the issue of peace and how best to obtain it. The extent of official Israeli

culpability in the Kibya incident is still not clear, despite the UN’s verdict or Ben Gurion’s denial. But right or wrong, deliberate or spontaneous, whatever the paradox in the use of force, the attack was meant to drive the Arabs toward an acceptance of *peace*. Second-guessing on the wisdom or folly of such a tactic is an unrewarding mental exercise. There are those who contend that Israel would have helped peace more by refraining from Kibya and appealing the Yahud murders instead—coming as the aggrieved party to the Security Council and demanding Jordan’s compliance with Article XII of the armistice for direct negotiations on border problems. We know from the latest Bennike report to the Council, dated March 2, that tension on the Israel-Jordan border has remained high in the three months past: 294 new Israeli complaints against Jordan; 211 new counter-complaints against Israel. Similarly, the mid-March murder of a busload of Israelis in the Negev scarcely suggests that Kibya was a successful deterrent to Jordanian guerrillas. On the other hand, we also know that UN efforts to obtain Jordan’s presence at a conference with Israel under Article XII or any other device have until now been vain and give not the slightest promise of success in any foreseeable time.

Nor does a judgment, one way or the other, on Israeli moral guilt and political maladroitness at Kibya bring any illumination to the pressing, practical issue that remains: how effect peace between the Arabs and Israel; nor on the crucial factors for that desired permanent peace: future Israeli behavior and the future policy of the West. And in turn these bring up two further questions: first, what was the reaction of the Israelis themselves to Kibya and the UN’s action, and what is their present temper? It is, one might hazard in advance, a temper which may explode unless given more consideration than hitherto. Secondly, can the Arabs be made loyal partners in the free world’s system of defense—and, if so, how? On this the disagreement between Israel and the West since Kibya—though possibly somewhat lessened by the political impotence currently shown by several Arab countries—remains at this writing a source of potential embitterment in the disordered times ahead.

(A 2nd article by Mr. Lehrman will follow.)

THIRTY DAYS THAT SHOOK NORWALK

National Hullabaloo and Local Community Action

JAMES RORTY

THE tumult and the shouting had died by the time I got to Norwalk. The overgrown colonial village, fifty miles northeast of Manhattan on the edge of metropolitan New York's bedroom belt, lay sprawled in the warm sunlight of a precocious February spring, grateful for the thaw that had followed a week of bitter cold; grateful, too, for the peace and quiet that had abruptly descended upon the community after thirty days of a loud but strangely bloodless and anonymous "witch hunt" that had repeatedly claimed the attention of millions of American newspaper readers, radio listeners, and television viewers.

At the White Bridge Filling Station, where the highway crosses one of the numerous tidal inlets that indent Norwalk Bay, we had the tank of our car filled by no less a person than Mr. Albert A. Beres, commander of the Mulroy-Tarlov-Acquino Post of the Veter-

ans of Foreign Wars, and a leading actor in Norwalk's drama. The day before, the national office of the VFW had forbidden Mr. Beres and all other local and state VFW spokesmen to talk. But it is as difficult to put a tight cork in Mr. Beres—an amiable 220-pound ex-sailor right out of *South Pacific*—as it was to conceive of his leading an ugly and fanatical outbreak of vigilantism. He just doesn't seem to be the type.

"Powie!" said Mr. Beres, the nozzle of his gas hose pointing skyward as he tried to express the mixture of consternation and private delight with which the national excitement about the Norwalk "reign of terror" had inundated his uncomplicated psyche. "We get a little publicity in the *Norwalk Hour*, and powie! bam!—all the reporters and radio commentators in America come piling in here. We ain't done nothing to nobody. We weren't trying to—what you call it—screen nobody. We just—arrgh! now you got me talking again!"

Stripped of the vernacular, this roughly approximates the VFW's official version of the affair, released a few days later in Washington after a national conference of VFW state commanders and committee chairmen. There was, of course, a good deal more to it than that. In retrospect the *Thirty Days That Shook Norwalk* seems like a kind of village charade, cooperatively written and staged by local talent, but with a great deal of help from visiting newspaper, radio, and television professionals. Perhaps it can best be understood if it is presented chronologically, just as you may have heard it on the radio or seen it on your television screen.

THE curtain went up on January 16, 1954, when the *Norwalk Hour* carried a banner headline:

HEADLINES in the *New York Times* on January 27 alerted its readers to the newest manifestation of the "witch hunt"—an attack on democratic liberties perpetrated in Norwalk, Connecticut. Just how much of an attack was it? This magazine sent a seasoned journalist, who happens also to be an outstanding civil libertarian, to take an objective look around in Norwalk, and he here offers a kind of case study of the way a few local sparks come to assume the threatening dimensions of a national holocaust. JAMES RORTY is the author of numerous books on radio, advertising, matters of health and food supply, and social problems in general, and has written widely on civil rights and other things in *COMMENTARY* and elsewhere. His most recent article in our pages (August 1953) was "The Anti-Communism of Senator McCarthy," an analysis of the latter's presumed "anti-Communist" opinions and methods which many national commentators consider the most solidly documented exposé published to date.

VFW ENLISTS FBI AID TO CURB SUBVERSIVES; NAMES ARE FORWARDED TO SECURITY OFFICIALS

The story, written to help along a membership drive by a Norwalk VFW member who, like most veterans, rarely attends meetings of his post, declared that "Mulroy-Tarlov-Acquino Post, Veterans of Foreign Wars, emphasizing the fight against Communism during its national membership week of January 24-30, has called upon Norwalk to join other communities in the United States in revitalizing its Americanism program." Names of Norwalk residents whose activities were "not related to a strong America" had been reported to the FBI, continued the story, although in the interests of security the names were concealed "under a veil of secrecy."

Quickly the alarm was sounded on the liberal front. In Norwalk and surrounding towns, telephones rang and cocktail parties buzzed. Something had to be done.

In its issue of January 25 the *Norwalk Hour* carried a paid advertisement headed:

SECRET SMEARS ARE UN-AMERICAN. DON'T YOU THINK SO?

It was signed by Alfred Baker Lewis, secretary of the Connecticut State Branch of Americans for Democratic Action, Devere Allen, editor of the *World Interpreter*, and Donald M. Douglas, a real estate agent, all residents of nearby Connecticut towns. The advertisement charged the veterans with being themselves un-American because they did not reveal what tests they used to determine whether or not their fellow citizens were doing things "not related to a strong America." The ADA group challenged the VFW Post to a debate on "whether or not their secret reports on people who fail to pass unannounced tests of strong Americanism are really patriotic."

THE veterans had asked for it, but that didn't make them the less infuriated.

They hadn't smeared anybody, publicly or privately. Their Americanism program was no different from that of scores of other VFW posts. They hadn't snooped, slandered, or attempted to sit in judgment on their fellow citizens—at least no evidence that they had actually done any of these things was ever produced. What their commander had actually done, by his own subsequent admission, was to relay to the FBI a report by a member of the Post about a single suspected Communist whose identity was never made public.

But unhappily, in addition to this routine action, in which liberals could have found little ground for objection or alarm, the Post had undeniably sponsored a stupid membership-recruitment publicity story, loaded with large and ominous phrases, and now the veterans were stuck with it, in a face-saving posture of defense that became more and more untenable.

So, with no preparation, aptitude, or stomach for the role, the veterans of the Norwalk VFW Post rapidly became the bad boys of the nation, scolded by all right-thinking—as well as left-thinking—publicists, magisterially reproved by the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, viewed with alarm by liberal Senators and Congressmen, let down even by President Eisenhower, who suggested at a press conference that they had better watch out for the libel laws.

What hurt most was that they were becoming almost without honor in their own community, which they had always been the first to serve whenever there was a civic emergency like a tornado or a flood, or a dirty job of plane-watching to do. Now Norwalk was turning against them. *Vox populi* was being heard in the letters column of the *Norwalk Hour* and four out of five of the letters—including some written by members of the VFW—were critical. The local ministers' association drafted a grave protest. Even the Chief of Police declared publicly that they had stepped out of their depth and had better leave red-hunting to the FBI.

IN HIS distress, Commander Beres asked for and promptly got the support of his National Commander, Wayne E. Richards, who on January 27 released a statement denying that the Norwalk Post's program was a witch hunt. Commander Richards pointed out that as far back as 1940 the national office of the VFW had been asked by J. Edgar Hoover to aid the security program and that it had accordingly advised its members to report to the nearest FBI office "any information they may have concerning persons, organizations, or actions suspected of threatening the security of the country." (Note that neither J. Edgar Hoover nor Commander Richards said anything about denouncing people for doing things "not related to a strong America.")

Commander Richards's statement was much too little and too late. Like a bad head cold, the Norwalk affair had to run its course. It reached a second-act climax on the evening of January 28, when about a hundred of Mulroy-Tarlov-Acquino Post's three hundred and fifty members met to discuss the progress of their Americanism program. After a lively three-hour meeting, Commander Beres emerged to confront a major mobilization of wire-service reporters, newsreel cameramen, and television crews. Flanked by the State VFW Commander and the state chairman of Connecticut's Americanism Committee, Mr. Beres read a prepared statement in which he declared that the Post had unanimously adopted a motion expressing its "confidence in the progress of the Americanism activities program and authorizing the Commander to continue a committee which has been working towards the objective of a strong America."

"At the specific direction of the membership," said Commander Beres, "the names of the members of the Post working on Americanism were not disclosed."

THE next morning the New York *Times* headlined the story:

MEMBERS UPHOLD V.F.W. "RED HUNT"; NORWALK UNIT BACKS

SPECIAL COMMITTEE; NATO WRITERS HEAR LISTING "EXPLAINED"

Rather fortunately than otherwise, as it turned out, the Post's meeting date had coincided with the arrival in Norwalk of a dozen foreign journalists, escorted by David Martin, executive director of the National Council for NATO, and Edward W. Barrett, former Assistant Secretary of State. The visitors goggled at the newspaper headlines, listened to the profuse apologies of Mayor Irving C. Freese for "this very unfortunate situation," and remarked that it was a curious "reign of terror" in which everybody in town was talking at the top of his voice. Britain's representative interviewed Commander Beres and reported that, whatever else might be said of him, Mr. Beres was definitely not the vigilante type. On the whole the NATO journalists seem to have been neither upset nor confused. They saw the Norwalk affair as the bumbling flap of a well-intentioned run-of-the-mine VFW Post which had been energetically rebuked by its own community after occasioning a disproportionate national uproar.

This, however, was not at all the impression conveyed by the *Times'* Fairfield County correspondent, who wrote that Mr. Barrett "did his best to explain the whole thing away" and that Mr. Martin had authorized this interpretation of Mr. Barrett's remarks. Mr. Martin denied this, but not in time to prevent the *Times* from publishing a vicarious editorial blush for the nation. Said the *Times*:

"The FBI encourages every citizen to report Federal crimes, but it does not encourage the kind of snooping, scandalmongering, and spiteful gossip that is suggested by the VFW's plan. The VFW, to do it justice, doesn't use these words in describing its plan, but it is fairly easy to guess what sort of field day the plan, if carried out, must produce. And, be it noted, the campaign is not confined to Norwalk. It is a national program.

"What the visiting journalists think of it

all one can't tell. One hopes they won't think that the nagging of people on account of their thoughts or words is typical of Norwalk or any other American community."

Thus, as the VFW's harassed National Commander was later to observe, do mythical oaks from tiny acorns grow.

FOR two straight weeks the Norwalk affair went steadily from bad to worse. Appearing on Ed Murrow's "See It Now" show February 2, Commander Beres again slipped a syntax or two: "It is nice to know that you all beared the stress of the cold with us and stood along, and that now that you are here, we have got a statement to put out to America today, and this is the statement expressed by the members of this Post." On the same program the literate and liberal Chief Justice Charles S. Daugherty, of the Criminal Courts of Cook County, Illinois, and national chairman of the VFW's Americanism Committee, publicly repudiated his Norwalk comrades, declaring that they had "temporarily forgotten that the responsibility for ferreting out Communists in the United States is the responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. . . . The great danger that lies in a situation such as this is that people having no experience in investigating matters are not competent to pass upon these questions, and there is grave danger in an operation of this sort that unsupported charges and non-provable charges will be made against individuals. . . . If all the Posts throughout America began operating in this same style, we would be building up in America a police state where neighbor would be spying upon neighbor, and such a condition would bring out a feeling of hysteria throughout the length and breadth of the land that would be difficult to overcome."

That day all the CBS news shows carried the Norwalk affair, and the other networks ran not far behind.

WHAT happened next was generally interpreted at the time as a strategic retreat, initiated by the national office to get

the VFW off the hook. Actually it appears to have been only one of numerous fortuitous happenings in the Norwalk comedy of errors. In anticipation of a forthcoming conference of the VFW's state commanders and Americanism Committee chairmen in Washington, the local VFW officers had been advised not to talk. Mr. Beres was therefore not available to represent the Norwalk Post on February 7, when the Fairfield County Forum was scheduled to discuss the Americanism program on Station WNLK. Instead, there appeared a much more sophisticated person, Mrs. Suzanne Silvercruys Stevenson, a member of the Women's Auxiliary of the Mulroy-Tarlov-Acquino Post, a daughter of the late Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Belgium, and a sister of the present Belgian Ambassador to the United States. Sizzling Susie, as she is known to her platform admirers, is a sculptress, author, lecturer, and founder of the Minute Women of America.*

Although Mrs. Stevenson did not represent officially either the VFW Post or the Minute Women, she took the trouble, the day before the broadcast, to quiz Mr. Beres about what he and other members of the Norwalk Post's by now notorious "secret screening committee" had actually done. Then, at the broadcast, she brought the

*The Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc., describes itself as "a non-sectarian, non-partisan Crusade, dedicated to preserve, protect, and promote the Constitution of the United States of America and the freedom it guarantees to individual citizens: We are dedicated to protect our country from Communism, Socialism, Fascism, or Collectivism in any form." It is one of a number of similarly dedicated organizations of patriotic women—mostly middle and upper class—which includes the Blue Star Mothers, Liberty Belles, and Freedom Clubs. The Minute Women was founded in 1949 at a meeting in Mrs. Stevenson's Norwalk home, and after serving as its first president Mrs. Stevenson continues as "national advisor." When interviewed by the Bridgeport *Herald* she expressed her concern about Communist infiltration in the schools, as evidenced by the "un-American" notions the children sometimes bring home to their parents. To the writer, however, she repudiated vigorously the rumor, widely circulated during the VFW controversy, that she had advocated mobilizing the moppets as informers against their teachers.

drama of Norwalk's *Thirty Days* to an unexpected dénouement. Performing with the aplomb of a seasoned troupier, Mrs. Stevenson informed her radio audience that the Norwalk VFW Post had never appointed or contemplated the appointment of a secret committee to turn in to the FBI Norwalk residents suspected of being Communistically inclined. Any statement to the contrary, she added, was not only untrue but "practically subversive." All that had happened, insisted Mrs. Stevenson, was that "somebody had suspected somebody," and that when this somebody had proved unwilling to make the report directly, "poor Mr. Beres" had undertaken to carry the message to the Fairfield County FBI office. For that, although the reporting of persons suspected of subversive activities is a duty placed upon every patriotic citizen by formal FBI requests, backed by repeated Presidential executive orders, Mr. Beres had been unjustly denounced and slandered. The Post itself, acting as a committee of the whole, and with every member bound by his oath to report subversives, was the only committee that had ever been appointed.

PRACTICALLY everybody assumed that Mrs. Stevenson was telling a diplomatic whopper, although nobody was ungracious enough to say so. Either there *had* been a secret committee, appointed to sift the reports of the members concerning suspected Communists, or Commander Beres and State Commander Charles J. Post, who had repeatedly asserted the existence of such a committee in print and on the air, had been guilty of some incredibly irresponsible play-acting. In fact, there is no actual record that any committee was ever either appointed or elected.

But by this time Norwalk, thoroughly fed up, didn't much care what had really happened, if only it would end. Mrs. Stevenson's authorized denial pulled the rug out from under her opponents—Bern Dibner, a Norwalk industrialist, and Stetson Holmes of Darien, director of the Mid-European Study Center, National Committee for Free Europe—and the Fairfield County Forum mum-

bled to a dispirited conclusion. When interviewed later, Commander Beres backstopped his substitute, adding plaintively: "We're not looking for nobody."

The Minute Woman had closed the show, for Norwalk and for the nation. Ten days later, when National Commander Wayne E. Richards released a 2,000-word statement on the Norwalk episode, it got a couple of sticks on an inside page of the *Times*, an even briefer brushoff by the wire services, and nothing on the air. After again denying the existence in Norwalk or elsewhere of "vigilante committees" formed to investigate, evaluate, or screen the names of suspected Communists, Mr. Richards declared: "According to the Norwalk Post Commander, who has now had time to adjust himself and think clearly, there is not and never has been a Post Committee ferreting out suspects in secret meetings. The so-called 'screening committee' was a figment of imagination, based on a fast defense mechanism of a plain citizen when he found himself projected without warning or time to think into the center of a national controversy, and on the receiving end of involved questions of civic responsibility that would tax the ingenuity of a Philadelphia lawyer."

Poor Mr. Beres. In the end his superiors, however reluctantly, had to throw him to the wolves. But doubtless there have been compensations. It was quite a show while it lasted.

There were even compensations for the bedeviled national office of the VFW, which toward the end got a chance to establish its genuine innocence of either recommending or permitting witch-hunting. On February 28, in what proved to be the last flicker of the Norwalk controversy, Commander Beres and National Commander Richards appeared with James E. Doyle, national chairman of Americans for Democratic Action, on the "American Forum of the Air." The discussion showed the two organizations to be in substantial agreement on both the right and the duty of citizens to report suspected subversives to the FBI, and on the importance of observing J. Edgar Hoover's directive of

July 26, 1950, which said, "The FBI is interested in receiving facts; we are not interested in what a person thinks but in what he does which undermines our internal security. Avoid reporting malicious gossip, or idle rumor."

NORWALK's retrospective evaluation of its witchless witch hunt is proud or rueful, depending on whom one talks to. In general, the ADA group seemed to feel that by alerting the community and the nation Norwalk's Paul Reveres *may* have averted what *might* have developed into a nasty epidemic of amateur snooping and tale-telling. This was also approximately the view of the Reverend Harold E. Martin, pastor of the Congregational Church-on-the-Green. Toward the end of Norwalk's Thirty Days, Dr. Martin devoted a sermon to the controversy in which he acknowledged the VFW's good intentions but pointed out that "snooping, scandalmongering, and spiteful gossip quite naturally and almost inevitably grow out of secret committees making secret denunciations. Such a system of reporting can become a witch hunt."

Actually, as Dr. Martin acknowledged to the writer, there was no witch hunt nor even any serious threat of one. Yet tension had risen in the community—enough to alarm a couple of German émigrés, members of his congregation, who thought they recognized the beginning of the terror they had experienced abroad. And a pair of shut-in old ladies, descendants of early colonists, had expressed similar alarm and indignation. Members of his flock had told him after the sermon: "It took courage to say that"—although Dr. Martin hadn't felt especially heroic.

Another group, which included some of the most politically sophisticated liberals in the area, insisted that what had occurred was a crisis, not of civil liberties, but of communications, fabricated almost wholly out of newspaper space and radio and television time. Included in this group was Dr. Samuel Schultz, the liberal rabbi of Temple Beth-el, who stubbornly refused to say anything for publication during the controversy. Instead,

in the midst of Norwalk's synthetic "reign of terror," Dr. Schultz had a local Negro pastor take over the Temple service.

Norwalk, as these liberals point out, is a rather enlightened community on all fronts, including race relations, always a major focus of Communist agitation. There have been Negroes in Norwalk for two hundred years and today Negro families live in every quarter of the town. When a white mob in Cicero, Illinois, attempted to prevent Dr. Harvey E. Clark, Jr., from occupying the house he had purchased, Mayor Irving C. Freese paid his fare to Norwalk, received him on the steps of the city hall, and invited him to settle in the town, which has three integrated public housing developments where Negroes and whites live together in complete amity. Dr. Clark chose to stick it out in Cicero, but a Negro physician occupies a two-hundred-year-old colonial house on the village green a few doors from the Congregational church.

Even Norwalk's Republicans belong predominantly to the Eisenhower wing of the party. Senator McCarthy, who spoke in Bridgeport during the last campaign, was not asked to visit Norwalk. Henry Myers, a Norwalk industrialist who is chairman of the Fairfield County Republican Finance Committee, is generally credited with the responsibility for this public slight.* The most

*Although Senator McCarthy has addressed a national convention of the VFW and although the Americanism committees of both the VFW and the American Legion have supported the activities of his committee and other Congressional investigating committees, the individual posts of both veterans organizations enjoy broad autonomy and frequently exercise it. For example, when Senator McCarthy conducted an abusive cross-examination of General Zwicker, the VFW Post in the General's home town of Stoughton, Wisconsin, sprang to his defense. In a unanimous resolution the Stoughton VFW Post declared that General Zwicker, "a valiant soldier," had been "outrageously abused and insulted." The resolution noted further that "Senator McCarthy's service record includes resigning from the service before the war with Japan was over . . . false claims about alleged wounds . . . false claims that he had entered the service as a buck private . . . efforts to promote decorations for himself."

vocal of the local McCarthyites is former State Senator Strofolino, defeated candidate for mayor in the last election. (Mr. Strofolino furnished comic relief on the Fairfield County Forum program, where he was teamed with Mrs. Stevenson. Just before he was shut off by the moderator, Mr. Strofolino was heard shouting: "These people won't let me tell you people what Communism is. I just—").

THE people in Norwalk who really understand what Communism is are the local anti-Communist labor and race-relations organizers. They have no time for witch-hunting because they are too busy checkmating the Communist and pro-Communist activity in the area, of which there is a good deal. (Mayor Freese was way off when he said the local Communists could be counted on the fingers of one hand. On the authority of sources better informed than the Mayor, it can be stated that there is more than one Communist ring operating in the Norwalk-Bridgeport industrial nexus.)

From the point of view of these realistic working anti-Communists, Norwalk's Thirty Days was a stupid snafu that helped only the Communists and their by now elaborately camouflaged followers. Why, they ask disgustedly, didn't the *Norwalk Hour*, instead of bannerizing the VFW Post's bid for membership, give it the quarter column on page eight that it rated? And why did the ADA liberals have to compound the newspaper's mistake by squaring off against the veterans, challenging them to a debate, and thereby needlessly polarizing the community? Why didn't they go to Commander Beres quietly through some of the liberal and labor union members of his Post and ask him to publish a corrective statement? If they had done that, would there have been any coast-to-coast press and television hullabaloes for national consumption and foreign pick-up?

This, perhaps, is the most serious question raised by the whole serio-comic affair. In an age so dominated by mass communications as ours is, it may be said that certain issues do

not really exist until they have been created by the news services. It is possible that the glare of publicity flashed into Norwalk's sleepy eyes may have averted a nasty epidemic of snooping. But it is also possible that Norwalk left to itself, and to its own self-regulating voluntary community devices, would have continued on its more or less sober and more or less responsible ways. Many of those in Norwalk who would be most sensitive to violations of civil rights believe that this latter possibility was the stronger one, and they do not thank the *Norwalk Hour*, the *New York Times*, the national press services, the ADA, and the sensation-hungry television crews for their noisy intervention, however well-intentioned. A few, indeed, would go so far as to question even the good intentions, suggesting that the spokesmen of liberalism, like their opposite numbers on the "right," are sometimes more interested in headlines than in consequences. Who was helped, they ask, by a publicity campaign picturing Mr. Beres and his fellow veterans as Storm Troopers? Not Norwalk, they think, and not the cause of responsible democracy, which in most American communities has shown itself able to protect democratic freedoms, even "in the present climate." And not the cause of the West with the embattled peoples of Europe, and the Far East.

Hindsight is always omniscient, but these working liberals—vigorously opposed to Communism *and*, one is forced to add, just as vigorously opposed to vigilantism—have earned a right to be heard. Maybe Norwalk, or the next American community that is threatened with a synthetic "witch hunt," will do better another time. The day I came to Norwalk, efforts were being made to set up a committee of liberal watchdogs to guard against the excesses of the VFW watchdogs. But the day I left, liberals who were asked to join this super-watchdog committee of "liberal" minute men and women were saying *ohne mich*. It seemed clear then that the Thirty Days could be considered definitely over.

SEDER IN ROME

As an American Family Celebrated It

LESLIE A. FIEDLER

IT IS difficult really to believe in Passover in Rome. By the time I had set out with my two older sons in search of *matzos* and a Community Seder, Holy Week was at hand, and the streets were full of tourists: the Germans (back in force this year) carefully avoiding every eye and speaking only to each other; the seedy herds of Austrians following their guides from crowded bus to crowded bus; the Americans resting between churches at chic sidewalk cafés. It was no use to remind my boys that, after all, the Last Supper was a Seder, too; nothing could redeem the sense of moving in loneliness against the current that flowed toward the great basilicas, the celebration of the *tenebrae*, the washing of the feet, and the final orgy of Easter Sunday when half a million foreigners and Romans would stand flank against flank, the visible body of Christendom awaiting the Papal benediction.

It does not matter that scarcely any Roman will confess to a belief in religious dogma—that Rome is also a city of anti-clericalism, with a statue of Giordano Bruno presiding over its busiest market; what is *not* believed is always and everywhere the same. And into each house before Easter is past, the priest will come with Holy Water and a blessing (only the most ferocious Communist will

bar his way) to wash believer and non-believer clean for the new year. The rhythms of the year, the rhythms of life itself, are the rhythms of the Church; and to be outside those rhythms as an American and a Jew is to be excluded as no one can ever be in America, where one's loneliness is what he shares with all his neighbors.

Yet the history and legend of Rome belong also to the Jews. My sons and I travel down the Corso where the *ebrei* were once forced to race against asses; we skirt the Forum whose furthest limit is the Arch of Titus, with its image of the defeated Jordan borne on a stretcher; and my oldest boy asks me if it is true that no Jew is permitted to walk under that memorial to the fall of Jerusalem. I tell him that this was once a commonly held belief, and that, for all I know, the Orthodox may still hold it; and I go on to recount the legend of how the Golden Candlestick of the Temple fell from the hands of a triumphal Roman procession into the Tiber. My sons argue about whether it was an accident or an act of God, and they make up a story about finding it again, gold in the black mud.

BUT by this time the modern Roman synagogue stands behind us, dignified and ugly, "built," as the guide-books say, "in an imitation Assyro-Babylonian style"—and my mind has wandered off to the melancholy gossip I have heard lately about the former Chief Rabbi who has become a Catholic. I saw him once in the halls of the University where he now lectures, distraught and melancholy—or perhaps it is only that I expected, *wanted*, him to seem so.

An East European type, certain unofficial informants tell me, despised by the "old Roman" members of his congregation, he

LESLIE A. FIEDLER offers here an account of a community Seder which he attended with his family last year in Rome, a city where, with Passover falling in Holy Week, the Jewish ritual of exile and longed-for return took on a special poignancy. Mr. Fiedler, associate professor of humanities at the University of Montana, has published fiction, poetry, and literary criticism in *Partisan Review*, the *New Leader*, and various other periodicals. He was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1917 and holds a doctorate in English literature from the University of Wisconsin.

was left to bear the brunt when the Nazis came, to face the problem of raising the ransom they demanded. Almost all of the rich Jews were in hiding, my informants go on to explain, so that in the end it was the Pope who put up the money. Then, the war over, the aristocratic members of the congregation returned and began to conspire against their somewhat shabby leader, who therefore etc., etc. God knows whether any of it is true; but that the story itself should exist is enough to confirm my melancholy.

But today there are wreaths in front of the Synagogue, eight or ten of them draped with the Italian tricolor, their green leaves already dusty and turning brown, for they have been standing out since March 24, anniversary of the mass reprisals in the Ardeatine Caves, when sixty or seventy Jews, along with nearly three hundred other Romans, were killed by the Nazis. The monument to the dead, surmounted by the cross and the Jewish star, is brutally impressive (the Romans have never lost their flair for celebrating death); but more moving are the occasional small plaques on nondescript apartment houses—memorializing some individual victim who once lived there. His fellow tenants, though they may have stolen his furniture once he was dead, will never forget him.

It is better to concentrate only on the dead. We stand beside the wreath and try to ignore the jaunty youngster who approaches us with a "Shalom" and offers to show us what is left of the "old synagogue" on a lower level. He speaks the sort of American a hep kid would have picked up from our soldiers, and his approach is precisely that of a street peddler offering to sell you something or change your money.

I TRY to tell my children something about the Ardeatine Caves, but I do not know the details they ask (What does the overhanging slab weigh? How old was the youngest victim?); and, anyhow, it is time to meet R. at the Portico of Octavia. More history. One part of the ancient portico has become

the atrium of the church of Sant'Angelo, where for hundreds of years the Jews were forced on each Sabbath to hear a sermon urging conversion. Across the front of the church, in Hebrew and Latin, an inscription still thunders against the outcast and stiff-necked people. Beyond lies the old Ghetto; and since R. has not yet arrived, we walk through the narrow, sodden streets, where my boys are impressed by the smell of filth and oppression. I do not tell them that all the poorer quarters of Rome share equally that ghetto smell.

In a little square that opens with typical suddenness around a fountain, a woman smiles at us hopefully and says, "Shalom." When we answer "Shalom," we are surrounded by six or eight young men who appear out of nowhere. Each of them is the twin of the boy before the Synagogue; each has a genuine Swiss watch or Parker 51 pen to sell. My children haggle with them enthusiastically, and they ask us about America; until, even more suddenly than they materialized, they have all disappeared. We see only the soles of feet flashing down a twisting alley. Then we understand, for a cop is riding past, winking at us good-naturedly.

Meanwhile R. has come, and we discuss getting tickets for the Community Seder. He knows, he says, a certain kosher butcher shop where one can buy tickets from a man named Polacco; he has this on excellent authority. So we go on to the butcher shop where no one will confess to having heard of *our* Polacco. "Naturally," the butcher tells us, wiping more blood off his hands on to an already sufficiently bloody apron, "there are many Polaccos. Which one, is the question, and what do we want him for anyway? Tickets for the Community Seder? Naturally, there are several Seders. Which one, is the question? Right or left, or—"

Right or left? In our bewilderment, R. and I consult each other in English; and some one taps me on the shoulder, draws me aside: a middle-aged man with a loud, impatient voice, who unexpectedly speaks excellent English. He is sure we would only be interested in the most Orthodox celebration.

"Naturally, where you don't have to worry about the food!" He turns aside to consult an elderly man with a beard who has been pretending all along not to be with him; I think they are speaking Yiddish, but they whisper and I can't be sure. "The price will be only—" The tickets are already in his hand, and he presses them enthusiastically into mine.

"But isn't there another?" I ask.

His face loses a little of its not quite plausible friendliness. "Another Seder? Yes, there is one, not so kosher, for the younger men, *very* young—" He looks me up and down carefully, estimating my age. "Twenty, twenty-five-year-olds. If anyone wants such company!"

"But isn't there one," I insist, "officially sponsored by the Synagogue?"

He regards me now with open contempt. "Officially sponsored? Children! A Seder sung by school children—" He walks off, followed by his accomplice with the beard, who looks back at us scornfully.

"Aha!" the butcher puts in at this point, "you want the children. It's the Polacco *School* you want, not Polacco!"

But R. isn't satisfied. He turns suspiciously on the butcher. "The *other* butcher, isn't he Polacco?" By this time, we do not know how many real or imaginary Seders there are, or what lies we may not be told in the interests of one faction or another.

"Him? He's my brother. We're Terracini."

It had to be Terracini! Not that it isn't a common enough name among Italian Jews: Terracina, Terracini—there must be at least twenty-five in the Rome telephone book, including the dealer in Catholic Church supplies; but R. and I are momentarily taken aback. Terracini is also the name of the Communist Senator who was one of the leaders of the recent rioting in the Parliament. That very day a session has ended with the Communists hurling inkbottles at the President of the Senate; and the day before, R. watched Terracini himself banging his desk with a stick in concert with his colleagues, so that the rollcall would not be heard. . . . And it was Terracini, too,

who a couple of months before explained away at a meeting of Roman Jewish intellectuals the anti-Semitic trials in Prague, denouncing as a Nazi and hireling our friend Professor T., who rose to challenge his lies.

Bur at last we have found the Polacco School, a *yeshiva* across the Tiber from the Synagogue, and Terracini is forgotten. The tickets and the matzos are being sold next door to each other; and the children are so delighted at reaching the end of our quest, that we are not even disturbed at the curtness with which the young women in charge treat us. Never have they been so busy, so important! "Speak up! Speak up!" They have no time to waste over our indecision.

While we try to figure out the difference between Swiss matzos and regular matzos, we are good-naturedly but efficiently mauled by the large crowd which struggles for first place with elbow and knee in the approved Roman style. They even look just like Romans, my children insist sadly; they don't look like Jews at all! And the matzos are called *azzime*, and they, too, are different in texture and shape from what we are used to. Even the Pesach wine (we buy everything in sight, flour, meal, wine; there will be complaints when we get home, but who cares!) turns out to be the customary *vino bianco* from Frascati, not the syrupy red stuff to which the children have been looking forward. But afterwards we are all relieved and happy, balancing the awkward packages in our arms; and we smile with a new and perilous sense of having found a community as we pass others carrying similar packages.

Next door, the lady in charge is delighted to see us; there will be another American at the Seder, she tells us, a woman with a small child. We will be like manna to them, for neither of them can speak anything but English. The Seder will be wonderful, *wonderful*! If we listen we can hear the children practicing now. It is true; we can just make out their voices, faint and sweet. We are pleased to be so wanted; and as we depart enthusiastically, the friendly *signora*

assures us that the rabbi himself will be there! It is to be the next night, and the children can hardly wait.

PERHAPS the rabbi *was* there, after all: we could never find out. It is true that there was at the head table a fine-looking, white-bearded old man, very genteel; but he could equally well have been an Italian Senator (even Terracini!), and he seemed throughout the celebration as bored as everyone else. The "American" woman turned out to be a South African who did not have a child at all, and she regarded the R.'s and us with dim hostility from the start. We arrived too early, of course, though we had allowed a half-hour past the announced time; and so we began under the terrible burden of shame borne by the first guest. The children from the school were already at their prayers, dressed in the Italian student uniform; but the white-draped tables which formed a square around their long crowded one were empty; and the teacher who led them glanced up from his book to us with what seemed to me a look of annoyance.

It was hot and I walked up and down outside with R., watching the arrival of the other paying guests. They turned out to be mostly very old ladies who drove up in expensive cars and were helped trembling up the steps by their chauffeurs. If they participated at all in the Seder, beyond nibbling a little from each of the plates set before them, I certainly could not tell. They were quite obviously only performing an act of charity.

Three young men came in at the last minute, dark and reticent, but obviously more at home than we, though they confessed later to being Americans. They seemed quite familiar to me, the kind of good Jewish boys who refuse invitations to dinner because they have promised their mothers to keep kosher. After the Seder, they told us in horror about the heterodoxies of the Roman Synagogue, about which I can remember only the fact that it celebrates Bat Mitzvah, the equivalent of Bar Mitzvah but for girls! Imagine it!

THE Seder service itself was badly cut and extremely dull, despite the real charm of the children (there was one girl with the black, ugly-beautiful face of a Bedouin) and the freshness of their voices. The only emotion I could sense was the anxiety of the teacher that they get through it all without too horrible a blunder! The sacrifice was just a bone on a plate, the egg only something to eat; and the earnestness of the performing children (even the littlest ones did not squirm noticeably until the end) was cancelled out by the apathy of the paying guests. It was a relief when the voice of the young Bedouin broke and they all giggled; or when the pregnant young wife of the teacher, who sat at the head of the table, reached over to slap her own child, distinguished from the others by not wearing a smock.

Three buxom waitresses in pink uniforms trimmed with the shield of David dashed frantically about with bowls of water for washing, herbs for dipping, etc., but they never managed to get anything to us on time, chiefly because the old ladies took so long waving them away; and we were often passed by completely, to the distress of my boys.

The meal itself was served somewhat more efficiently, though, naturally, not until everything was satisfactorily cold. It was a completely Roman, non-Paschal meal: broth with *pasta*, slices of roast veal, and finally artichokes *alla giudea*, which is to say, Jewish style; for the Jews have long been famous as restaurateurs in Rome, and this is their most notable contribution to the local cuisine. It was somehow the last disconsolate touch! Whether the school children had the same fare or not was difficult to discern, for they did not eat off china, like the guests, but from a single metal bowl, like the setting in a prison or a Dickensian workhouse.

There was more singing after the meal, of course; and for this the parents of the children were let in, ruddy-faced working people, ruddier with washing and the excitement of seeing their offspring perform for the rich. They sat across from us on wooden benches against a farther wall, look-

ing at the pale old ladies and parchment-yellowish rabbi-senator, not in hostility, but like representatives of a different species. Over their heads, a sign read in Hebrew: *With a strong hand!* And it would have taken a Strong Hand, indeed, to have brought us all out of Egypt together.

From this point on, the ceremony was speeded up until I could no longer follow it in the *Haggadah* I had brought along; the children had long since lost interest. Finally, the weary little students were permitted to sing one song in Italian and out of tune: the "*Chad gadya*," into which they flung themselves with obvious relief, while their parents beamed in approval and the old ladies tried hard to smile. Only then, the teacher, who had conducted and prompted in suppressed anguish all evening, rose to explain the symbolism of the egg, the herb, the biters; but conversation was general on all sides, and the chairs of the children creaked. Only his wife listened to him, earnestly, one hand resting lightly on her swollen belly—poised for the quick slap if her own child grew restive.

Afterwards, the old ladies and the bearded gentleman shook the hand of the teacher, who bowed gratefully like a superior servant, while the children trotted off, chattering, on the arms of their parents. I was ashamed to look at my wife or the R.'s, and I wanted even to apologize to my sons; but they were content, after all, for they had been able to wear their new skullcaps with the initials that their great-grandmother had sent them, and they had drunk two glasses of wine apiece. *Next year in Jerusalem!*

THERE was not a bus or streetcar in sight. The Communist trade unions had called a strike for that day in protest against the new election law passed by the Demo-Christians despite inkwell-throwing and desk-banging. When we had come down to the Seder, there had still been some transportation available; but now everyone had decided to enjoy the stoppage with that frightening good humor with which a Roman crowd greets any disorder. They stood in groups on

the street corners joshing each other about getting home, or sat at the tables of sidewalk cafés cursing the government of the priests. All the old ladies had long since been whisked back to the fashionable quarters by their chauffeurs, and no one was left who knew it was Pesach.

We could not even find a taxi, and the R.'s decided to walk. "*Gut yontif*," we called to each other as we parted, but we did not believe in it. After three-quarters of an hour, during which the children grew wearier and crankier, a bus came lumbering along which would carry us within a mile of our house. On the long ride home, my wife and I argued bitterly, chiefly because I, for some reason I can no longer recall, refused to admit how miserable the whole evening had been. Finally, I was yelling so loud that the two other passengers were watching me, delighted to be so entertained. Despite it all, the children had fallen asleep, and had to be awakened for the hike home; but they were surprisingly cheerful.

We had almost arrived, when someone hailed us. It was an American girl we knew and her Italian husband, both Jewish, both very young, and determinedly liberal.

"A big day," I said, thinking wearily of the holiday.

"The strike, you mean," he answered. "We really tied them up tight! This should be a lesson for De Gasperi and the Vatican, too." He seemed as enthusiastic about it as if he had arranged it all himself.

What was the use of arguing . . . ? "We're just coming from a Seder," I said to change the subject.

"A Seder! I'll bet." He laughed, hoping it was a joke.

"No—no—I'm serious. And tomorrow we're having another—a *real* one at home, so the kids will really understand it."

At that his wife could no longer bear it. "How can you do it?" she cried in horror, turning from me to my wife in search of an ally. "Do you mean to say that in this day and age you tell your children—" she could hardly manage to say it—"you teach them that we're the *Chosen People*?"

OUR WELFARE STATE AND OUR POLITICAL PARTIES

Squaring Political Programs with Realities

NORMAN THOMAS

I THINK President Eisenhower's Message to Congress on the State of the Union (January 8, 1954) is a historic document. Not because of its specific content—the President's proposals, while wide in scope, were neither original nor adequate. What gave the Message historic significance was its implications with respect to what his party has called, usually with contempt, the Welfare State.

After twenty years of Republican denunciation of the New Deal and Fair Deal, the first Republican President since Herbert Hoover accepts completely the duty of the federal government to act as and when necessary to prevent or check depression; to look after farm prices; to extend the scope of social security; to regulate labor relations equitably; and to accept a large measure of responsibility for public health and better housing. The President's only reference to socialism was a statement flatly opposing "socialized medicine"—something which be-

gan with the first public health department and would be continued and enlarged, despite the President's abhorrence of the term, by his vague proposals on "reinsurance." All in all, this Republican President, avowed foe of "creeping socialism," has given us the most comprehensive program* for a Welfare State yet set forth by a high official.

This is the more striking because General Eisenhower, when president of Columbia University, had gone so far in his distaste for social security as to bid us to consider prison as its fitting expression. As recently as January 12, 1952, he told a New York audience: "In these times we hear so much of security, security for everything we do. . . . I should think that the best example of it would be a man serving a lifetime in a federal prison."

Lawrence Fertig, a priest of the utopian cult of "free enterprise" (meaning a *laissez-faire* economy), in the spring of 1952 insisted over and over in a radio interview that Dwight D. Eisenhower was a far sounder opponent of the Welfare State and socialism—the same being almost identical—than Senator Robert Taft. Yet Eisenhower's address to Congress would have been regarded as socialistic, if not socialist, by La Follette in the Presidential campaign of 1924, by Smith as well as Hoover in 1928, and even by Franklin Roosevelt in the campaign of 1932. (Roosevelt's public advocacy of a fairly complete Welfare State began only after his in-

ON THE threshold of seventy, NORMAN THOMAS more than matches, in miles traveled and public addresses given, those other indefatigable elder statesmen Herbert Hoover and Bernard Baruch. In addition, at a time when his younger contemporaries seem content with repeating themselves, he has been contributing some of the most vigorous and invigorating creative political thinking presently available on the American scene. His just published book on anti-Communism and civil liberties, *The Test of Freedom*, illuminates one of the murkiest areas of our national life, and he tackles here another central issue, the much discussed disparity between the professed beliefs and principles of American political parties and their programs and practices as they struggle to cope with present realities. Nor does he omit from his conscientious, pragmatic criticism his own Socialist movement, for which he stood six times as presidential candidate.

*Let me stress again that I am discussing the significance of Eisenhower's acceptance of the Welfare State, rather than the quality of his proposals for it, or his administration of it. The latter is marred by many unwise appointments and by his concessions to the McCarthyite spirit. In important areas—e.g., water power and conservation—his proposals are inadequate and overly concerned with protecting private profits. I fear, too, that he will do too little too late in dealing with economic recession.

auguration. Originally, he had proposed to balance the budget and reduce the number of Hoover's commissions and committees; his great victory in 1932, in contrast to his later triumphs, had chiefly a negative basis: he wasn't Herbert Hoover.)

True, while President Eisenhower, in message after message, outlines his Welfare State, many of his most powerful supporters still spend corporation money on advertising—deductible at the expense of the rest of the taxpayers before computing income—to denounce precisely the sort of state for which he recommends appropriate measures. For them, government planning (except such as may benefit their corporation balance sheets), the Welfare State, the New Deal, and socialism are, along with Communism, “noxious nostrums out of the same bottle, statism.”

THIS *de facto* acceptance of the Welfare State by a Republican President represents, nevertheless, no betrayal of party. Republicans in office long ago began flouting their own laissez-faire pretensions. The Eisenhower program merely marks conspicuously the point of no return our country has reached. We have been traveling the present road at varying speeds at least since the days of Theodore Roosevelt, much of the time behind guides who kept saying all the while that they were going in just the opposite direction. For some years I have been telling audiences that the last President with honest and fairly consistent belief in the old laissez-faire economy was Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, who advocated free trade, and tariff for revenue only. When Congress passed a bill to give free seed to Texas farmers heavily hit by drought, Cleveland vetoed the measure in these terms: “I can find no warrant for such appropriation in the Constitution, and I do not believe that the power and duty of the general government ought to be extended to the relief of individual suffering which is in no manner properly related to the public service or benefit. A prevalent tendency to disregard the limited mission of this power and duty should, I think, be steadfastly resisted, to the end that

the lesson should be constantly enforced that though the people support the government, the government should not support the people” (February 16, 1887). Mr. McKinley, his high-tariff successor, could not with straight face have written a similar message.

I am not concerned now to try to determine relative responsibility for this progress towards the Welfare State and a mixed economy, or for this country's *de facto* rejection of that faith in the adequacy of the law of supply and demand, and the automatic equilibrium of markets, which was dinned into my youthful ears in a great university. Socialist education played a part; so did pragmatic progressivism and pressure from organized workers and farmers. The greatest role, I suspect, was played by the course of human events, the demands made upon the state by two world wars, the Great Depression, and the present grim arms race.

That race is unavoidable in face of the Communist passion for universal power. We should not even win abiding peace by sacrificing our liberty. Unless and until Communist imperialism ceases to drive for world rule, or until all nations agree to carry on their conflicts without resort to modern atomic war, the arms race must go on. Our best hope of security would, of course, be the achievement of universal and controlled disarmament. Until then, we must expect such terrible commentaries upon the madness of our times as the President's chart, which shows that in a hungry world 68 cents of the American budget dollar must go for armed defense. This huge expenditure has thus far not only contributed to our uneasy security but has been a principal factor in maintaining relatively full employment. It is the planned production it requires that has chiefly removed so vast a segment of our economy from the sphere of laissez-faire.

BEFORE 1914 it was generally agreed, even by those who rejected doctrinaire determinism, that economic interests more fundamentally than politics shaped human destiny. Wars, hot and cold, have since reasserted the primacy of political decisions, forc-

ing on governments a type of planning directed toward the political goal of national security. No consideration of modern society, no doctrine or practice of the Welfare State, is meaningful which ignores that fact. Yet its significance is largely ignored.

This is only part of the extraordinary failure of most of our current political and economic theory to fit the actual facts of our social life. An intelligent foreigner, knowing nothing more about our American economy than he would learn from our ritualistic eulogies of free enterprise and our widely proclaimed abhorrence of socialism, would never dream how much government intervention there is in our economy, and how far the process has gone of subsidizing directly or indirectly almost every economic interest group. (I like to quote an economist friend who says that the only genuine practitioners of true, unaided free enterprise are boys playing marbles for keeps.)

What has happened in America since the turn of the century, and more especially since 1939, is by no means the elimination of poverty or the menace of recurring large-scale unemployment. Nevertheless, what has taken place makes older descriptions of poverty and of the lot of the workers seem irrelevant almost to the point of absurdity. Only the other night I joined in a seminar, organized by the Union for Democratic Socialism, composed mostly of "radicals" with close connections with the labor unions, while it batted around statistics concerning the distribution of the national income, the change in the standard of living, etc. The actual share of the workers (before taxes) has increased percentage-wise since 1939 less than some conservatives may think. But production has increased enormously; the heaviest tax rates fall on the upper group; "fringe" benefits to organized labor, and governmental provisions for social security, have profoundly changed the economic position and psychology of millions of workers; while parity prices have done a similar service for farmers. Only a comparatively small minority of our people were not definitely better off by the end of 1953 than they or their fathers

were as recently as 1939. This was generally agreed, and some of the social and political consequences thereof were discussed.

HOWEVER, because we refuse to revise our public theory in terms of the far-reaching beneficent changes in economic and social realities in America, we gain no credit for it. On the contrary. Almost everywhere abroad, notably in Asia, American propaganda has convinced people that we hate socialism and are the capitalist country *par excellence*. Now both socialism and capitalism have rather different meanings and very different emotional overtones for Americans than for our foreign friends. The latter usually are persuaded that if our America is capitalist, then it must be imperialist, too. Over and over—for example, in India—I have experienced the bewilderment of men asked to applaud our system of free enterprise and copy it, and then told to admire what we have done by social planning. Sometimes they judge our social order by our free-enterprise propaganda rather than our deeds. Then they believe that our self-proclaimed capitalism must still be the capitalism of Upton Sinclair's *Jungle*. (At my suggestion Mr. Sinclair has circulated widely a denial that his famous book accurately pictures *today's* conditions.) Occasionally they look at our labor and social legislation, and the relative freedom and prosperity of our workers, contrast it with their understanding of capitalism, and decide that America indeed is an Alice-in-Wonderland world. In either case, the trained Communist propagandist exploits to his advantage our failure to square our widely advertised theory with our practice.

We pay a price, not only in foreign relations, but here at home. Men do not do well the thing which in theory they deny they are doing. That is the trouble with much government planning. In our time only two first-rate theoretical contributions have been made to the study of economics by non-socialists. They are the late John Maynard Keynes's theory of spending, saving, and investing, and of the role government may play in the process; and—of far less impor-

tance—John Kenneth Galbraith's suggestive but not conclusive study of American capitalism in terms of "countervailing" power. Roosevelt's depression program was a kind of pragmatic, watered-down Keynesism which, in theory, knew not Keynes. It could not end the depression which it alleviated. What ended the depression was the war and arms economy, which, because it involved so much government spending, may be regarded as a kind of bastard Keynesism.

I am one of those who have come to believe that, theoretically, a capitalist economy under a government which will practice Keynesism can deal with depression. I am less sure that it can—or will—deal with inflation. And—what is of major significance—Keynesism apart from a war and arms economy has never been adequately tried out. Whether a capitalist society—or one which thinks itself capitalist—would spend under the peacetime need to end a depression an adequate equivalent to what it has done under the compulsions of hot and cold war is doubtful; whether, if it did so, it would remain capitalist in ideology and culture, and still protect the dominant claims of private profit, is even more doubtful. The next few months may give the answer if the current recession should continue.

WILLIAM PETERSEN, in a thoughtful article, "Is America Still the Land of Opportunity?" (COMMENTARY, November 1953), concludes that while our economy is mixed "our culture in effect is already socialist." In terms of his definitions and evidence, he makes a strong case. I should certainly agree that the philosophy of the Welfare State which we have so fully accepted in practice is socialist rather than laissez-faire capitalist. The adequacy of private profit as the sole incentive for producing abundance has been tacitly rejected. The practical political question no longer is: shall the state concern itself with farm prices, conservation, housing, social security, the avoidance of depression—but: *how* shall these things be done? Conversely, it is impossible today for a political party to put forward an immediate

"revolutionary" program unless it wants what is in America politically absurd or fantastic: overthrow or drastic change little related to the immediate desires or well-being of the electorate, but directed by some fixed dogma concerning the road to a future utopia.

Actually, in America the concern of any party—even a socialist party—is no longer with the capitalist "status quo"—with maintaining it or totally transforming it. Today the concern of every party is rather with problems of how much or how little of this or that measure it shall propose *within the Welfare State pattern*. (This is true even of the issue of public ownership; today public ownership is neither the total menace nor the total panacea we used to deem it, but simply another instance of state intervention for the public welfare, requiring a specific justification in each particular case.) The situation is vastly different from what it was when I ran for mayor of New York City in 1925 and 1929, and for president in 1928 and 1932. Now Republican as well as Democratic candidates have to support proposals—e.g., for social insurance and public housing—of a sort then generally denounced as socialist and occasionally as "revolutionary."

Nevertheless, I hesitate to call our culture "in effect socialist," because of the precarious and unsatisfactory meaning of the adjective "socialist" when applied to a culture which stridently insists that it is nothing of the sort.

AND this brings me to a question of peculiar interest to myself, of course, but also to the American people. Why is it that socialism, the same socialism which is sometimes given more credit than it (or I personally, as its champion) deserves for changes generally approved in America, is so weak today? It is a partial but by no means adequate answer to say that it is weak because its ends have been so largely achieved by non-socialist governments. Socialists insist that their demands are by no means satisfied nor all their plans carried out. Millions of our people in town and country still live at a level below a minimum standard of health and decency. In European countries which have accepted

the Welfare State on democratic lines, avowed socialist parties are very strong. Why not in America?

Plenty of Americans will tell me that the trouble is with the name: the very word "socialism" has been discredited by Hitler's and Stalin's use of it. (To which some would add that socialism has failed in Britain—a statement which does not square with facts.) Admittedly socialism, like Christianity, suffers from the confusion of its sects and from the misappropriation of its name by National Socialists and Communists. The latter have not so much fulfilled socialism—even Marxist socialism—as betrayed it. I myself have sometimes thought and said that what we need is a new and more precise vocabulary in politics and economics.

But the stubborn fact remains: socialism under that name is still a great force in the world, not to be got round by a new vocabulary. There is plenty of evidence that parties or groups or individuals cannot escape being indicted as socialists simply by avoiding the socialist label while supporting measures rightly regarded as socialist in origin. (In some ways I have fared better in America because, whatever I am, no one could expose me: I did it for myself.) Democratic socialists here in America must openly offer their own interpretation of socialism, if for no other reason than that socialism is so great a force in the world in which America must live. That doesn't mean that an American mass party inspired by democratic socialist ideals must call itself a socialist party. It probably will not, but whatever its name, it should not deny its inspiration.

In any event, one must look for something deeper than the distrust of a word to understand the low estate of organized socialism in America. Already there have appeared historical analyses of the socialist mistakes and blunders that determined or helped determine socialism's failure as a party. More are in the offing. I shall admit that our American Socialist party made many mistakes, although I might challenge some verdicts of the critics on the nature of those mistakes. But what socialist party, here or abroad, has

not blundered? I am ready to argue that our record in this respect is no worse than that of the German or Austrian Social Democrats, the French Socialist party, or even the British Labor party, all relatively strong today.

It used to be commonplace among the American Socialists to say that their party was the casualty of persecution in World War I. Doubtless it suffered unfairly, but it got its highest vote in 1920, when its candidate, Gene Debs, was in prison. La Follette, whom the party supported in 1924, also suffered in the war but made a powerful comeback, as did George Norris of Nebraska. No, World War I does not explain the party's fate.

Neither, I think, does its opposition before Pearl Harbor to military intervention in World War II. The Social Democratic Federation, which boasts that it was the first political association to urge open belligerent participation in the war on the side of the Allies, did no better in winning supporters than the Socialist party.

It is true that no democratic socialist party ever gained permanent strength by reason of its stand on the foreign policies of its country, not even on the issue of peace and war. It is true that democratic socialism everywhere lost prestige and power because of the confusion and impotence with which it met the outbreak of World War I. But in our society of national states, democratic socialist parties have stood or fallen primarily on domestic issues.

AMERICAN socialism, in contrast with most of European socialism, never had behind it the dynamism generated by a tradition of oppression. Here the vast majority of the workers enjoyed full political rights. In general, too, the developing and expanding economic situation in America conformed less than it did in Europe to socialist patterns, Marxist and non-Marxist, of description and prognostication. Moreover, the United States, unlike most other democracies, has a system which puts a premium on two and only two major parties. This theme, of the differences between America and Europe as the basic

explanation of the relative strength of organized socialism on opposite sides of the Atlantic, I have repeatedly developed in speech and writing. I shall not expatiate upon it now. But I cannot forbear reminding my readers that the same facts of American history and political structure which have frustrated the Socialist party have given us two irresponsible major parties with more important differences within each of them than on the average between them.

Here I am concerned to stress a fact more relevant to my present purpose. It is that not only American socialism, but democratic socialism universally, suffers from errors and confusions in doctrine and propaganda. This is a statement that may seem to contradict my own reference to the strength of socialist parties in many countries and of socialism's continuing importance to us Americans. But even in Europe, socialism's errors have weakened it. Every strong democratic socialist party struck firm roots in Europe before World War I or soon thereafter—that is, before history had clouded socialism's too easy hopes. The more contacts I have with foreign socialists the surer I am that, transplanted to this country, they would not have done much differently or better than we American socialists.

IT is hard in brief space to generalize on socialist errors, since there has been much difference in socialist dogmas and their interpretation, not only between Marxists and non-Marxists, but within the ranks of each major division. Nevertheless, despite variations in emphasis, socialists generally presented to the world too simple a hope of salvation by the acceptance of social, as differentiated from individual, ownership. They assigned to a "working class" metaphysically, even mystically conceived, a greatly oversimplified messianic role. Most socialists reduced the undeniable fact of the existence of conflicting economic classes to a dogma affirming one overmastering struggle between two sharply defined classes, owners and workers, that had little or nothing in common. On the recognizable common interests of all the world's

workers, especially before World War I, was based an emotional internationalism; this, when tested by war, broke down because it had not faced the practical realities of our organization into national states, and the emotional, or psychological, realities of patriotism.

The deep convictions of socialists compelled them to believe in the necessity of social planning, especially during what many socialists called the "transitional period," but they optimistically believed in the intuitive ability of a government representing "the working class" to plan adequately under arrangements and controls appropriate to genuine democracy. And they sorely neglected the problem of statism, to which increase of the state's power, even for good purposes, unavoidably tends, except as democratic controls are consciously established.

Professor J. L. Talman, in his notable book *The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy*, argues that as far back as the French Revolution there was a division among advocates of democracy between those whose emphasis was on an unattainable utopian salvation and those who emphasized liberty for individual human beings. The former emphasis made it easy for extreme democrats to turn into totalitarian dictators. Marxism, or some forms of it, contributed to this process by insisting that there could be no true democracy for that abstraction, mankind, save through the complete reorganization of society under control of that other abstraction, "the working class," which would use the impersonal state as its chief tool. Many socialists, not themselves Communists, were hindered in their understanding of Communism and their struggle against it by this Marxist delusion.

In its beginnings in Europe, socialism had to be revolutionary in the popular sense. It operated in countries where the machinery of political democracy was grossly inadequate or non-existent. In some nations socialism still faces such conditions, and there emphasis on class conflict was, and is, natural and necessary. Historically, however, neither socialism nor Lenin's Communism has ever triumphed simply by the victory of "the work-

ing class." Revolutionary socialism was aided by the internal breakdown consequent on national wars, and had to seek some sort of acceptance by, or alliance with, peasants and sections of the middle class. Moreover, when it triumphed through force and violence the process tended gravely to impair its devotion to democracy based on individual freedom.

In countries like ours, where democracy may be imperfect but is very real, socialism must present itself, not as its denial, antagonist, or "contradiction," but as its fulfillment. It wants to carry over government "of the people, by the people, and for the people" into control of the economic process.

Democratic socialism has emphatically rejected "people's democracy" as a mask for one-party or personal dictatorship. It accepts an ethic of justice and freedom which is not derived from or limited by the supposed tactical needs of any class in its struggle for power. It is, therefore, not only stupid but self-defeating for socialists, especially in the United States, to talk a language of "revolution" and class conflict so absolute that it can be understood to imply that "the workers" have "nothing in common" with their fellow countrymen. Socialists cannot successfully compete with Communists in vulgar Marxism. (They have, moreover, a right, and the duty, to point out that Communism is not a true form of Marxism, but a heretical movement corrupted by the passion for power.)

WE AMERICAN socialists, in presenting socialism as the fulfillment of democracy, are logically committed to an appeal based on respect for the individual man and universally valid concepts of freedom, fellowship, and justice. These concepts may be historically conditioned by changing economic factors, but they are never the exclusive by-product of any economic dialectic. Socialist democracy is no mere goal and end, to be gained by any method or means. Recognizing that the democratic method is essential to the achievement of fellowship and freedom under any social order, I myself think of socialism as first and last the democratic method in its *fullest expression*.

This matter of democratic method raises a peculiarly difficult problem for socialists here in the United States, where there are only two mass parties with apparently no place for a socialist third party. It is wholly desirable that ours should be a two-party country. In general, it is far better that those compromises which are a necessary part of democratic living and governing should be made within each of two parties separated by broad differences of principle and program, than to try and patch together cabinets out of splinter groups as in France. In any case, our way of electing a President practically forces the voters to choose A or B, lest in voting for C they help elect the least desirable candidate. I never ran for President in order to build a socialist "third party," except as that might be a step toward bringing about a realistic realignment of the two responsible major parties—and, of course, as a tactic for socialist education. Obviously, my running failed to build the Socialists into a major party, or to enable them to play the part of a catalytic agent bringing about a new grouping and orientation of parties.

American socialists recently have been of two views on tactics. Some of us have hoped and worked for the building of a new mass party largely backed by labor (but not controlled by labor unions through their chiefs) which would supplant one of the major parties, or compel them to unite. Of the speedy emergence of such a party I now see small sign. Other socialists have believed, on the basis of the New Deal performance, that the Democratic party might be made into a responsible organization steadily developing into an instrument of democratic socialism. These socialists, or some of them, thought that the defection of the Eisenhower Democrats would hasten this process. But present trends are in the opposite direction. The Democrats have as their major goal a superficial harmony sufficient to give them victory in the Congressional elections of 1954. They will unite more or less in criticizing the Eisenhower program, but they are scarcely more united than the Republicans on a positive program. Their poverty of ideas and

courage was shamefully exposed when Democratic Senators joined in the vote, 85 to 1, which gave Senator McCarthy's committee increased appropriations, but no instructions on proper procedure. Adlai Stevenson was wooing Governor Herman Talmadge—who threatens to break up the public school system in Georgia should racial segregation be declared unconstitutional—on the very day that the Eisenhower administration was announcing its participation in the appeal to the Supreme Court against segregation. Neither Stevenson nor any other Democrat is crusading for a positive, well-articulated program. In face of these facts, there is at the moment no clearly indicated tactic of socialist action that would tend to force the political realignment which I long have sought. We socialists are thrown back on an emphasis on fundamental education.

THERE is another difficulty, one which we democratic socialists in America share with our comrades in other lands. Socialism's ideals, history, and traditions are internationalist; it is a theory and a movement cutting across national lines. If it forgets this fact, it tends to lose its own soul. At the same time your democratic socialists, precisely to the degree that they are democratic, must achieve power within the existing framework of the national state. They can and should hold up ideal goals, but their appeal to workers living on the margin of hunger must be in terms of attainable goals of full employment and social security within each country.

Socialists may realize, for example, that the economic well-being of Europe requires a high degree of European integration. Most socialists on the Continent and even in Britain admit that fact. But the process of integration, with its necessary readjustments of tariffs and social security provisions, and its threat of extensive unemployment during the process, makes it exceedingly hard for responsible socialist leaders to push actively toward the goal in which they believe. Add to these practical economic considerations the fact that neither the socialists themselves nor the workers and peasants to whom they want to

appeal are free from nationalist pride and prejudice, and you have an explanation of the internal difficulties and disagreements that have beset European socialist parties in their approach to European defense as well as economic integration.

Men live by their loyalties, and loyalty to one's country is the deepest and most inclusive loyalty that most men know. In our day, assuredly, "patriotism is not enough," but it is something—something which has meant and still means a great deal constructively, in life. Socialists are fully justified in accepting patriotism and trying to transcend it, in working for the good of people within the boundaries of their nation and at the same time trying to work out a program which will make everybody's good more secure in a larger area of cooperation.

It is far easier for me to write these words than for socialist statesmen in a divided Europe to work out appropriate programs. A concrete and practical international program cannot be derived simply by deduction from socialist principles. Certainly not when Communist imperialism with its armies and fifth columns looms so large on the horizon. Democratic socialists, by the very nature of their socialist heritage, want peace, and international fraternity. But they also want national security from the threat of Soviet domination. In some ways their very idealism makes it hard for them to face the realities of the cold war, and to seek peace with freedom on the basis of military strength.

But, while supporting defense, we must renew our insistence that the most practical next step would be for the nations, while maintaining their strength and resolution to preserve freedom, to join in a crusade for properly controlled universal disarmament. International socialism has done little thinking or effective acting along this line.

It has not been made as clear as it should be that in our day, in the light of the Communist performance, and in the face of the Communist threat, the outstanding immediate issue is not socialism versus capitalism, both concepts being in a state of change and transformation, but democracy versus totali-

tarianism. Facing up to the realities of the age, the socialist can hopefully believe that democracy under our present order can reach its socialist fulfillment; by that same token he now knows, on the record of history, that totalitarianism is the denial of all that he cherishes, that it destroys liberty without bringing peace or material equality, much less abundance, to its slaves.

Democratic socialists here and in Europe, even those of a Marxist persuasion, would substantially agree with my uncompromising condemnation of totalitarianism, Communist as well as fascist. But many of them are loath to accept the logical consequences of their own verdict on Communism. They are all too willing to be persuaded that the peace which men passionately desire can be had at the easy price of agreement with the Kremlin. Sometimes their false optimism has been encouraged by a conscious or an unconscious conviction that Communists, despite their "errors" and "shortcomings," are still Marxist, loyal (as American "capitalists" cannot be) to a non-imperialist peace and the emancipation of "the working class."

THIS old emphasis on the class struggle rather than true democracy has made it hard for democratic socialists in Italy, France, and elsewhere to do what so often they have had to do: work in a coalition government with anti-Communist, non-fascist, parties. Many socialists are inclined to have a sense of guilt about "collaboration"; in yielding to the necessity for coalition while laboring under this sense of guilt, they have often been less effective than they might have been in strengthening their government's policies. They have not made the fight they might have made either against the very reactionary forms of capitalism and neo-fascism at home, or against Communist aggression from without and penetration from within. And the result has been that many of them now find themselves once again headed for the dead end of a coalition with the Communists. A re-thinking of the whole matter of the true meaning of democracy, and a re-analysis of the Marxist concept of the class struggle,

would be of real help in improving socialist strategy in the cold war.

What I have been writing must of necessity be a suggestive rather than a definitive criticism of present-day socialism. I should be sorry if it seems to any reader to mean any radical reversal, much less my abandonment of it. Never have I more deeply prized its great tradition, long antedating Marx, as a champion of right and justice for the lowly of earth. Down through the generations socialists in quest of the emancipation of their race, their country, or their class have often embraced error and cherished hopes incapable and sometimes unworthy of fulfillment. But democratic socialism has, for all its faltering, survived, and in some strength. Whether it succeeds in going forward depends on the capacity of socialists to emphasize what is true and immensely valuable in their tradition and apply it to the present needs and problems in the complex forms and settings in which they confront us today.

Among the valuable elements of the socialist tradition I should certainly continue to place insistence upon an extension of social ownership. There seems to me to be no excuse in social theory, or the present situation, for private ownership of the great natural resources or for private right to ground rent. Individual owners never made, nor today do they individually exploit, the coal, the iron, the oil which they claim to own. Individual owners never have created rental values for land apart from improvements on it. It is obviously easier to plan for proper development and proper conservation of natural resources if they are considered our common heritage. In the case of monopolies or oligopolies, private ownership has largely lost the justification of a managerial function. That is delegated to hired managers who are more or less impelled to plan primarily for the profit of absentee owners. If experience has proved the inadequacy and even the danger of a doctrine of wholesale nationalization for our economic salvation, it nonetheless supports the contention that an extension of social ownership *under democratic controls* would enormously facilitate sound

planning and the elimination of waste. This contention is universally recognized as socialist, and we who make it in forms and under controls appropriate to our times are most assuredly in the socialist tradition.

So, too, are we in our devotion to an even more fundamental contention—that social well-being must be a conscious goal sought by planning.* It is a goal which will not be securely achieved by any nation until it is achieved by mankind.

Socialism, if it is both honest and wise, will not promise an earthly paradise. But it will speak with assured hope of the joy men may find in working steadily forward toward

*A gallant and thoughtful old British socialist theoretician, Fred Henderson, is insistent that socialist planning must reckon with the faulty mechanism of money and credit. He makes his case well, but leaves plenty of room for alternative solutions to our present confusion. Socialists have too much neglected this subject.

the one utopia worth achieving: a fellowship of free men and free nations that will use man's marvelous technology no longer for war, but for the destruction of poverty and its attendant exploitation of men.

It is my deep concern that today this great hope of mine finds no effective instruments in any political party. The Democratic party under Roosevelt in his first six years served fairly well as an extremely pragmatic substitute, innocent of social theory, for a moderate social democratic party. Today it is not only divided but, even in its more liberal wing, destitute of passion and program for sustained social progress. It lives by chewing over and over the cud of the New Deal.

For me to speculate on whether this instrumental poverty of the American people must indefinitely be their portion lies beyond the scope of this article. But on its past record, one may have substantial confidence that our American democracy will find its way.

THE GRANDMOTHER

DAVID GALLER

for E.G.G.

IT SEEMED as if I'd gone to the dance,
Instead of them. Though they
Dressed in blue and rose, and made
Such talk, it was I

Who watched the stars on the landing;
And the friendly wicked moon
On the wall in the bathroom
Winked wry advice on my tray of medicines.

I could hear her talking to her dead.
The most considerate thing to do was leave
her:
By twelve, she would sleep soundly. . . .
It was cold; and, taking her shawl from
the mantel,

I wrapped it about me. In the hall, my
Father's hat and stick murmured consent.
Yes,

I had learned such faces as were useful: I
Could tip-toe on the thick brown rugs,
feeling

Honest. I slipped outside. The snow
Was falling. I stood in the shadow of
The lamp above the door; stood looking at
My hands, clasped before me. . . . The
streets

Were quiet and empty, but for one who
Watched me, who spoke softly: "Don't stand
With your hands folded; don't worry, your
Life will be a good one. . . ." and passed on.

My father came out, and stood beside me.
Not a word of anger, not a smile; but, gently,
He led me inside. And, then, I
Heard them coming from the dance; and I
Heard her calling, though it was past twelve.

DAVID GALLER, a native and resident of New York City, is a young poet whose verse has appeared in the little magazines.

MODERNIZING THE JEWISH PRAYERBOOK

Revisions That Sacrifice the Spirit

THEODOR H. GASTER

THROUGHOUT the ages, the Prayerbook has occupied a central position in Jewish life. More than a mere manual of devotion, it is—in a sense—Israel's personal diary, catching, as in a series of exquisite vignettes, the scenes and moments of her entire life, and recording, in a diversity of moods and styles, her deepest and most intimate emotions. Here, for those who have eyes and ears, is Sinai on the one hand, and Belsen on the other; the gleaming courts of the Temple, and the peeling walls of a Polish *klaus*; the blare of the silver trumpets, and the singsong of the Talmud student; the colonnaded walks of a Spanish town, and the narrow, winding lanes of Safed. Here is a Gabirol effortlessly bringing down the immortal to earth, and a Rhineland cantor scribbling his earthiness into immortality. Here is Luria panting desperately after the Celestial Chariot, and Kalir pinning the glories of God to an acrostic.

Yet the remarkable thing about the Prayerbook is that, for all its gradual growth, its diversity of expression, and its infinite variety of atmospheres and modes, its basic outlook and philosophy have remained always the

same. Back of the elaborate rituals of the Temple, the tortuous virtuosity of the medieval hymnographers, the quirks and conceits of the Cabalists and mystics, there has lain a common adherence to certain fundamental tenets and concepts: the divine direction of nature and event; the immutability of the Torah, or divine dispensation; the Covenant and the special commitment of Israel; the eternity rather than transience of life; the ultimate, inevitable triumph of righteousness. Through exile, crusade, Inquisition, and pogrom, Israel has consistently found in these ideas the frame for her identity and her experience.

IN RECENT years, however, the feeling has grown up in this country that the traditional Prayerbook is no longer adequate to the needs and outlooks of modern worshipers, and a number of revised or "revamped" versions have made their appearance. Some of these are the official products of denominational organizations and have been formally adopted in the service of the synagogue*; others are the private efforts of individual rabbis.† Some, again, are ambitious attempts covering major portions of the liturgy; while others take the more modest form of vademecums for such special occasions as mourning and memorial services,** or Sabbath de-

RESPONDING to the felt religious needs of the different Jewish groups in the United States, numerous revisions and retranslations of the traditional Prayerbook have been made in recent years. But, as might be expected, none has proved completely satisfactory, if one listens to the congregants. THEODOR H. GASTER here examines some of the most widely used modern versions of the Prayerbook, with a view to discovering what may be wrong, both in style and substance, and how we may hope to better the situation. Dr. Gaster, professor of comparative literature at Dropsie College in Philadelphia and lecturer in Semitic civilizations at New York University, was born in London in 1906. His most recent book, *Festivals of the Jewish Year*, includes the series of articles historically tracing and interpreting the chief Jewish holidays which he contributed to these pages.

*E.g., the revised edition of *The Union Prayerbook* (2 vols., Cincinnati, 1951-52), which represents the Reform liturgy of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; and the *Sabbath Prayer Book* of the Reconstructionist Foundation (New York, 1945).

†E.g., Rabbi Max D. Klein's *Seder Avodah* (New York, 1951), and Rabbi Morris Silverman's *High Holyday Prayerbook* (Hartford, 1933), both of which represent what is known conventionally, though somewhat loosely, as a "Conservative" standpoint.

**E.g., the memorial services designed by Rabbi Max Davidson (New York, 1940) and Morris Silverman (Hartford, 1949); or Rabbi Abraham A. Feldman's *The Mourners' Service* (New York, 1941).

votions in summer camps.* All of them, however, are distinguished by the fact that they are essentially *doctrinal* in character, aiming not so much at interpretation as at modification of such traditional concepts as, for example, the election of Israel, the restoration to Zion, the coming of the Messiah, and the resurrection of the dead; or at the introduction of new concepts and new prayers deemed more representative of the outlook of the average American Jew.

Thus far—apart from a few vituperative outbursts and one notorious “burning of the books”—there has been little attempt to evaluate these efforts and even less discussion of their basic premises and principles. Unhappily so, for in this unredeemed day and age the average American Jew acquires his conception of Judaism mainly from what he hears in synagogue and reads in prayerbook, rather than—as did his ancestors—from direct study of the Bible and rabbinic literature.

ALL of the new productions proceed from the assumption (either overtly stated or tacitly implied) that a prayerbook must be exclusively *contemporary*—that is, must voice nothing that is not consistent with the sentiments of those who use it. At first blush, this assumption seems reasonable enough. On closer scrutiny, however, it is seen to rest on a profound misconception of what the Jewish Prayerbook really is. For the fact is that the Prayerbook is the expression of Israel throughout the ages, not in any one single generation. Accordingly, its forms of expression can never be entirely or exclusively contemporary; they are also historic. To reduce them to the temper of the immediate here and now, to confine the idiom of thought to that of a particular age, is therefore like lopping off the spires of Chartres Cathedral because they are not in accord with modern styles of architecture. Moreover, the Prayerbook is an expression—at once a synthesis and an epitome—of all Israel everywhere. Accordingly, to restrict it to the attitude of a particular community or environment is to destroy its essential catholicity.

Equally assailable is the failure of the modern revisers to realize fully the implica-

tions of the fact that the bulk of the traditional Prayerbook happens to have been designed not for private devotions but for public services. A public service is essentially a ceremony and, like all ceremonies, necessarily dramatic, its purpose being not only to express but also to *impress*. The criterion for judging the validity and efficacy of the traditional forms must therefore lie not so much in the degree to which they reflect the private aspirations of worshipers as in that to which they stimulate sensations of awe, attune the heart and mind to an apprehension of awe or the numinous, and promote a feeling of participation in a continuous, and not merely immediate, experience. It speaks not merely for the moment, but for *tradition*, which links the present and future with the past. To this end, a certain amount of exotic archaism—a detachment from the usual and familiar, and a sustained reminiscence of the past—is not only useful but virtually imperative; to discard it is not only to forego forms but also to sacrifice emotions. Indeed, it is strange that those sensitive to the value of archaism in ritual—to the use, for instance, of the ram's horn rather than the cornet, or of the manuscript scroll of the Law rather than the printed book—should be so oblivious of its effectiveness in the spoken accompaniment.

EVEN more serious is the failure of the modern revisers to realize that the idiom of ideas is necessarily fluid and dynamic, and transcends the language of a particular generation.

The basic concepts of the traditional Prayerbook are expressed, to be sure, in an antique idiom—in a series of figures and images (e.g., Zion or the Messiah) which stem originally from the circumstances of particular times. Idioms being—like all language—necessarily progressive, dynamic, not static, the various figures and images have long since outgrown their original sense and setting. Zion, for example, has today the same sort of extended, symbolic meaning as have Parnassus and Olympus, neither of which any longer denotes, in common speech, a particular mountain in Greece. Similarly, the figure of the Messiah—originally the anointed Davidic king whose advent was so fervently awaited by the Jewish exiles in Babylon—is today but the personified

*E.g., *Summer Camp Services for Jewish Children*, by Rabbi Edward E. Klein and Mabel H. Meyer (New York, 1952).

epitome of a future Golden Age when the Kingdom of God will be firmly established on earth.

More than that, these wider meanings were really inherent in the concepts from the beginning. What the ancient Hebrew saw in Zion was not simply the local shrine of Israel's particular god, but *by that very token* the spiritual center of the globe; and when the exile in Babylon spoke of the Messiah, he was thinking not merely of a Davidic king, but of one who, *in that particular capacity*, would symbolize and realize among men the law and dispensation of God.

To discard these figures merely because they have outgrown their original setting is, therefore, as undiscerning as it would be to expunge from the English vocabulary such words as "jovial," "martial," "trivial," "tawdry," "melancholy," and the like, which have undergone precisely the same development; or to eliminate from popular lore all reference to Cupid or Santa Claus because the former is no longer a Roman god, and the latter no longer Saint Nicholas. This whole procedure, with its total disregard of the factor of transference, dehydrates the imagination, thereby making all poetry impossible and freezing into an artificial rigidity what is naturally and inherently plastic.

Undoubtedly, the modern American Jew is capable of expressing the same fundamental concepts in a less archaic and more contemporary idiom; but to discard the traditional terms for that reason—to speak of "the future Golden Age" instead of "the days of the Messiah," or to substitute "the brotherhood of Mān" for "the kingdom of God"—is to ignore the function of distinctive language as an expression of distinctive culture, and that of folklore and poetry as a practical instrument of continuity and social cohesion. Moreover, in this particular instance the conservation of time-honored forms solves the specific purpose of providing a common frame for a group which is geographically scattered, and a method of safeguarding a culture which has long lacked the protection of its natural matrix.

NOWHERE, perhaps, has this basic error of literalism found more unequivocal expression than in the introduction of the *Sabbath Prayer Book* of the Reconstructionist Foundation.

Some [say the editors] have attempted to obviate the need for change in the traditional prayers by reading into them meanings completely at variance with what they meant to those who framed them. The practice is fraught with danger. To read those new meanings into the traditional text by way of translation is to violate the principle of forthrightness. To assume that the average worshiper will arrive at them of his own accord is to expect the unattainable. Our prayers must meet the needs of simple and literal-minded people, even of the young and immature. . . . Unless we eliminate from the traditional text statements of beliefs that are untenable and of desires which we do not or should not cherish, we mislead the simple and alienate the sophisticated. . . . Rather than leaving [sic] such questionable passages to reinterpretation, we should omit or revise them.

What is wrong with this statement—quite apart from its assumption that prayers are something that should be composed *for* people rather than issue *out* of them—is that it completely misunderstands the meaning of meaning, failing to distinguish between denotation and connotation and between sense and significance. *All* literature acquires its meaning by a process of collaboration—a junction of minds and experiences—between author and reader. To restrict the meaning to the author's original conception is therefore a fundamental error; and in this case, that error is all the more crucial because it blithely overlooks the fact that the written words happen to have been designed expressly to receive their meanings from the emotions, passions, and aspirations of those who repeated them. To put it another way, the position taken by the Reconstructionist revisers rests on a confusion between the text of a prayer and the prayer itself; the truth is that the text of a prayer is but a mold to be filled with the contents of individual spirits.

IF THE broad premises of the new prayer-books are thus open to question, even more assailable is their failure, or hesitation, to come to grips with the real problem of worship as it presents itself to many modern minds. The nub of this problem lies in the fact that the traditional services—like most forms of worship everywhere—are based on the concept of a transcendent, external God who works upon nature, man, and event, and who must be approached and addressed. To-

day, however, there is a growing apprehension of the idea that, in His relations with man—and that is all with which prayer can be effectively concerned—God operates *within* and *through*, rather than *without* and *upon*, and that He is realized by the effort of man, and not by extrinsic supernal intervention. On this view, the emphasis shifts from inspiration to aspiration, from the bestowal of heavenly favors to the fulfillment of human potentiality. In other words, it is the divinity working in man, not in heaven, that becomes important. Without canvassing the question of what He may be absolutely and to Himself, the God of many modern worshipers is the indwelling and inworking Spirit rather than the Lord of Hosts.

This, it should be emphasized, is, *au fond*, in no way a revolt against Jewish tradition; it represents only a change of perspective or angle of vision—a stress on the receiving rather than transmitting end of a relation which Judaism has always affirmed. On the basis of this emphasis on immanence, the essence of the Atonement services will now consist not in invocation but in evocation; not, that is, in supplication for pardon before a heavenly judge, but in a process of self-regeneration through intensive stimulation of the Divine within one. Similarly, the emphasis of the Passover liturgy would lie not on any external, preternatural intervention by a transcendent God—not on the “outstretched arm” or the “signs and wonders”—but on the in-working of an immanent Spirit—a figurative pillar of fire—which led the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, and which likewise leads all men inevitably from bondage to freedom. In short, the direction of prayer would be outward rather than upward—a movement of communion and absorption rather than of adoration and subservience.

Then, too, any serious adaptation of the traditional liturgy for modern worshipers ought to take account of modern thought on the question of whether God can indeed respond to individual petitions, or whether He is not rather an impersonal cosmic entity. If the latter is the case, prayer becomes essentially a subjective gesture, and the only possible form of address to God one of ecstatic apostrophization.

The new prayerbooks, however, show no awareness of these issues. There is a great

deal of tinkering and toying with particular ideas and phrases, but no serious attempt to think through the basic problem of prayer itself, or to exploit the plasticity of the ancient forms in order to fit them to a more modern theology.

WEAK as they are in general premise and approach, the inadequacy of the revised prayerbooks becomes most clear in their handling of specific themes.

Take, for example, the treatment of death and immortality in burial and memorial services. Jewish tradition is wisely vague and undogmatic about the ultimate destiny of the living. It has been content to speak, without undue precision, of a “keeping-alive of the dead” (*tehiyath ha-methim*) or of the soul’s being “bound up in the bond of the living.” If mythology and popular lore have elaborated these clouded insights into pictures of celestial and infernal realms, such elaborations have had no doctrinal sanction. All that is really basic is the affirmation that earthly existence is part of a larger, infinite continuity, so that death is neither absolute nor final, but amounts to a recession of the immediate into the continuous; in this sense, indeed, only a moment, and not a being, can die.

Our modern revisers, however, have almost invariably represented eternity not as the wider orbit within which all lives and moments are embraced, but as a sequel or aftermath to earthly existence. The Union Prayerbook, for example, describes “our life” as “but a fleeting gleam between two eternities”—a high-sounding phrase without any intelligible significance whatsoever, since, if eternity means anything, it means a single unbroken continuity. The same prayerbook speaks also, on two different occasions, of death’s being the gateway (or, more grandiosely, the “portal”) to eternal life. This, too, makes no sense, and for the same reason: a gateway or portal is where you come in, whereas eternity necessarily includes the present; therefore you are already in it.

The debasement of eternity into mere after-life has tended also to turn it into a kind of spatial Elysium. It is, once again, the Union Prayerbook which is (characteristically) most definite on this point. Says the Neilah service of the Day of Atonement:

Still another dwelling Thou has destined for us, O Source of Life; an eternal abode to which we shall go after our brief day on earth has closed. Open to us the gate of Thy grace; unlock for us the portal of eternal peace, when the gates of our earthly home shall have closed behind us.

Nor, indeed, is the standard Reform revision by any means the only culprit. In the memorial service designed by Rabbi Max D. Davidson, God is invoked to fulfill His promise of "immortal life and reunion with our dear ones in that place of fadeless light and perfect peace for which our existence on earth is but a preparation." Quite apart from the fact that such a promise is probably news to the Jewish God, here again the tremendous concept of an eternity in which all temporality is embraced is reduced to the pedestrian level of "pie in the sky when you die."

Similarly, when Rabbi Morris Silverman's *Memorial Service* poses the question:

*Shall God who made life out of nothing
Be unable to turn what had life into higher
life?*

we have, once more, the same false identification of continuance in the larger life with translation to a higher one. Besides, the statement contradicts itself; for it can refer only to the soul, and if the soul is immortal—which is what it seems to be saying—then obviously it always has life and cannot be described as something that once *had* it.

THE traditional view on immortality is set forth in an ancient and famous morning prayer* which may be rendered as follows:

My God, the soul which Thou has set within me is incorruptible. Thou it was created it; Thou it was fashioned it; Thou it was breathed it into me; and Thou it is maintaineth it within me. Thou, too, it is will lift it out of me, yet bring it back, still linked with me,† for all time to come. . . . Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who

The prayer is taken substantially from the Talmud (Berachot 60) and was originally designed to be recited on waking.

†Literally, within me. Possibly this statement was intended as a subtle protest against the doctrine of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls.

grantest to them whose bodies be dead that their souls come back.

It requires but a little imagination to see that what is here proclaimed is not—as the Hebrew wording might at first suggest—a doctrine of resurrection or of the return of the soul to the body, but rather the assurance that, after it has been severed from the body, it nonetheless returns, in a sense, to the world of men and continues eternally in it. This continuance, it is affirmed, does not take the form of mere immergence in an impersonal timelessness—of mere absorption, along with all other souls, in one amorphous and anonymous whole. By the grace of God, the soul returns and continues with its own distinctive identity, in the personality and character which survive bodily dissolution and live on in posterity, in memory, and in the impact of individual lives and works upon the future. In this sense, says the writer, the soul may be said indeed to come back "within me," that is, endued with my essential self; and God to bestow upon the bodies of men the final mercy that the souls or spirits which they encased do not perish with them, but return in this form to the world of men, corruption thereby putting on incorruption.

But what have the modern revisers done with this magnificent affirmation? Like so many earlier translators, they have read into it a doctrine of the restoration of souls to bodies, and have then proceeded to obviate the embarrassment of so naive a concept by various palliative devices, speaking instead of some vague reclamation of souls by God or of their indefinite continuance in a beclouded never-never land. The Union Prayerbook, for example, substitutes for the reference to the soul's return "within me" (or "still linked with me") the loose paraphrase: "Thou wilt take it from this earth that it may enter upon life everlasting"—gratuitously assuming, into the bargain, that eternity is necessarily extraterrestrial; while Rabbi Max D. Klein's *Seder Avodah* (following the older Reformers) alters the Hebrew text to read, somewhat similarly: "Thou wilt take it from this world and endow it with immortal life in the time to come"—a change which is meaningless, since the whole point of the prayer is to declare that, despite its temporary association with the body, the soul is all along immortal in any case. In

similar vein, Rabbi Morris Silverman's prayerbook speaks of a reclamation of the soul, and tones down the final words of the prayer to a blessing on God as "the Source of Life Eternal."

In all of this, it would seem, a cold breath has once again extinguished a living flame.

CONSIDER also the doctrine of the Messiah and the Messianic Age. Several of the revisers seem still to be preoccupied by a revolt against the concept of a personal Deliverer. Both the Union and the Reconstructionist prayerbooks, for example, prefer to speak neutrally of "redemption" where the traditional text speaks of a Redeemer. One might not unreasonably expect, however, that by this time of day the "extended" and symbolic character of the Messiah would have become apparent and that the revisers would have elected to develop the potentialities of this traditional figure of folklore rather than to suppress him altogether (as they likewise suppress Elijah) in the interests of an unperceptive literalism. Moreover, they might have realized that some of the more familiar allusions to the *Goël*, or Redeemer, in the traditional liturgy—as, for instance, in the first paragraph of the statutory Standing Prayer (*Amidah*)*—really refer not to a Deliverer "at the end of days," but to the fact that constantly and in all ages God rewards the piety and loyalty of the fathers by providing their descendants with men who serve them, as it were, in the capacity of the *Goël*, or "next-of-kin," who was required in ancient Hebrew law (Leviticus 25:25 ff.) to "redeem" and avenge his enslaved or distressed relatives. (Thus far—in the wake of Abudraham—only Rabbi Max Klein has seen this point.)

As for the Messianic Age, the general tendency of the revisers is to identify it with a golden era of universal brotherhood. Thus, in the great prayer *Al ken nekavveh*—which Schechter described as a Jewish *Marseillaise*—the traditional references to "the ordering of the world under the sovereignty of the Almighty," and to the common acceptance of "the yoke of Thy Kingdom," are transmogrified in the Union Prayerbook to a

polite yearning for the day when "all, created in Thine image, [may] recognize that they are brethren, so that, one in spirit and one in fellowship, they may be forever united before Thee"—significantly leaving out all mention of the *yoke*, that is, of the crucial element of sacrifice, burden, and self-denial in the furtherance of the divine dispensation. Similarly, Rabbi Klein waters down the same phrases to a desire for the time "when the world . . . shall have been perfected under Thy reign in the hearts of men," and to a petition that "all [may] accept Thy rule of justice and peace"—where the element of militant, selfless campaigning for God is reduced to the comfortable enjoyment of untroubled ease.

The revised versions are open to objection also on the score that they leave out of account the crucial question of what is actually envisaged: whether a mass conversion of all peoples to Judaism, or a merging of Judaism in some general, universal religion. The Reconstructionists, to be sure, have tried to clarify this point by adding an "interpretative version" in which they declare themselves to be hoping for the day when men will "recognize, in the soul of every nation, race and religion, a manifestation of Thy divine spirit and will accord to every human society the equal right to serve Thee with whatever gifts Thou hast bestowed upon it." It is difficult, however, to reconcile this with what is surely the *raison d'être* of the Jewish people and the essence of its Covenantal obligation—namely, the propagation to the whole world, not merely of a general acknowledgment of God, but of a specific code of Law (Torah) in which His will and dispensation are believed to be revealed.

In the Union Prayerbook, this polyannish utopianism is combined, in turn, with what has been described as "theological meliorism"—that is, a belief that God manifests Himself only in progress and in the improvement of human life. Says a passage in the Afternoon Service from Yom Kippur: "No law emanating from Thy will can be invoked to justify any conditions that deny men opportunities and cause them sorrow and suffering." One is left wondering, however, whether this summary settlement of the problem so laboriously threshed out in the Book of Job, this cavalier rejection of the theory that suffering is a divinely appointed

*"Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God and the God of our fathers . . . Who rememberest the loyalties of fathers, and bringest a *goël* unto their children's children. . . ."

discipline and that God reveals Himself in shadows as well as lights, does not in fact amount to a misconstrual of history and to a failure to interpret Jewish experience. As W. F. Albright has put it, in his *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, "Nothing could be farther from the truth than the facile belief that God only manifests Himself in progress, in the improvements of standards of living, in the spread of medicine and the reform of abuses. . . . Real spiritual progress can only be achieved through catastrophe and suffering, teaching new levels after the profound catharsis which accompanies major upheavals."

ANOTHER questionable divergence from the traditional attitude is the romantic idealization of the past. Rabbi Klein, for example, in translating Israel Najara's famous Aramaic hymn *Yah Ribbon Alam* (chanted in the home on Friday night) substitutes for the reference to "Thy people whom Thou chocest from all nations" the words, "Thy folk . . . who served Thee, Lord, in every age"; while the Union Prayerbook declares, in its Sabbath morning service, that "through the ages Israel hath been faithful to Thee," and speaks, in another place, of "the steadfastness with which the passing generations of our people have clung to our heritage" and of "their undying determination to struggle for the triumph of reason, justice and love among men."

To be sure, Jewish tradition has always been supremely proud of its heritage, and it has always emphasized the "merit of the fathers" (*zechuth aboth*) as capable of tipping the scales of divine justice in favor of their descendants. But it has never claimed any over-all virtue for the men of old, or held them up collectively as paragons of piety and fidelity. On the contrary, its attitude has always been that, by and large, Israel has been throughout the generations a stiff-necked and refractory people—"both we and our fathers have sinned"—and that its survival is probably due more to divine mercy than to its own efforts. The change represented in the revised prayerbooks is unsatisfactory because it bypasses the age-old debate on whether the present plight of Israel—its exile and detachment from spiritual moorings—is due more to God's impatient wrath or to its own persistent betrayal of the Covenant. More-

over, it fails to draw an adequate moral from the vicissitudes of Israel's experience or from the fact that the movement of history includes regress as well as progress.

FROM the ideological standpoint, then, the conclusion would seem to be abundantly justified that the new prayerbooks are weak alike in premise, approach, and performance, and that they contribute little, if anything, to the serious advancement of religious thought. Well-meaning as they undoubtedly are, there is about them a pronounced air of triviality, a tendency to attenuate rather than accentuate the distinctive values of Jewish tradition, to simplify rather than clarify, to reduce the profound to the shallow, the rarefied to the commonplace, poetry to prose, and to substitute for the restless Jewish urge for intellectual satisfaction the present-day itch for comfort and ease. They are, in short, symbols of spiritual attrition, of a frame of mind and a temper of feeling in which prayer has dwindled from an outburst to an exercise.

All of these defects are perhaps, in the final analysis, but symptoms of a basic mediocrity—a mediocrity which is not only ideological but also literary.

One of the essential things about prayers is that one cannot write them without praying them, any more than one can write a convincing love song without being in love. For prayer is primarily a spiritual outpouring, and only secondarily a verbal form. The new prayerbooks, however, convey an irresistible impression of being artificial and contrived, mere literary ersatz, issuing out of formal piety rather than out of rapture, agony, or despair. They are so patently written *for* worshipers rather than *by* them, substituting grandiloquence for intensity, virtuosity for poetry, religiosity for religion. Where the traditional prayers seem always to feel more than they say, relying for their power upon imaginative suggestion and pregnancy of phrase,* the new ones seem, on the contrary, to say always more than they feel and to depend for their effect upon clichés and verbal baubles. Can anyone believe, for example, that when the Union Prayerbook beseeches

*This does not overlook the tortuous artificiality of many of the *piyyutim*; but these were designed as poetic embellishments of public services rather than as actual prayers or devotions.

God to "calm our troubled spirits that athwart our tears may arch the rainbow of Thine eternal promise," this is really the authentic voice of an overburdened heart? Or is it possible to credit to a genuine artlessness such a cliché-ridden statement as "*bleak winter has fled, and gladsome spring has come; the earth has clothed herself in her garment of green*"? Again, was there ever a woman on earth who spontaneously poured out her soul to God by declaring, as that prayerbook would have her declare, that "our domestic relations move in a circle of affection and responsibility"? Or did anyone ever naturally pray over newly-weds, as Rabbi Klein requires them to pray, that they might be rendered "instrumental in conceiving and in transmitting those domestic virtues which have ever been the joy and inheritance of the congregation of Jacob"?

Even the classic simplicity of the Psalms falls victim to this grandiloquence. Rabbi Klein, for instance, will not have the mountains skip like rams (Ps. 114:4); they have perforce to be "*disturbed like rams*." Nor will he allow it to be said of the heavens which declare the glory of God that "their voice is not heard" (Ps. 19:3); instead, we are informed that "no vocal sound from them is heard." Similarly, in the famous quotation from Ecclesiasticus, the Union Prayerbook will not "let us now praise famous men," but insists that we are to "call to remembrance the great and good"!

Sometimes, too, the temptation of high-sounding language leads to curious results, as when Rabbi Silverman has us "trembling with trepidation" at New Year—how else can one tremble?—or when the Union Prayerbook (once again) yearns for the day when "all Thy children shall be gathered under the banner of truth and stand united as one common brotherhood"—forgetting that this image logically implies the idea of rallying under a banner to go to war, whereas, if everyone stands united in a common brotherhood, there is no one against whom to fight.

ALONG with grandiloquence goes garrulosity. Especially irksome is the tendency of the new prayerbooks to ghost-write people's emotions, as if the average worshiper could not be trusted to feel them for himself. Perhaps the most striking example of this is Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman's *Mourners' Serv-*

ice, which provides a kind of prompt-book for the sentiments both of the bereaved and of their condolers during the week of mourning. What is offered may best be evaluated by direct quotation. On the second evening, the mourners are informed that "our presence, perchance, brings momentary forgetfulness, some slight measure of surcease. But the lonely hours through the night and day have brought a sharper realization of bereavement. The dazing effect of the blow may have begun to wear off, as does the numbing effect of some drugs, and there is now a painful consciousness of an aching emptiness."

This is neither prayer nor religion, but an intrusion upon the privacy of the heart. Nor is it palliated by more of the same platitudinous banality on the following evening, as when the bereaved are solemnly apprised that all stages of life "have their difficulties. At each stage, there are heartaches, trials, troubles. . . . Suffering is the common lot of man. None is immune. . . ." Or when they are told—with appalling distortion—that the Kaddish "is a memorial prayer," and are invited to recite it "in honor of our departed ones" so that it may "be a public acknowledgment of the benefits we have derived from those who have returned to their eternal home."

The point of these examples, be it noted, lies not so much in their literary tastelessness, as in the indication they afford that the new prayerbooks were written in a study, not in a passion. One is tempted, indeed, to exclaim with Vaughan:

*Oh! 'tis an easy thing
To write and sing;
But to write true, unfeignèd verse
Is very hard! O God, disperse
These weights. . . .*

IT is a Jewish tradition that prophecies of doom end with words of comfort. In line with this tradition, it is perhaps only fair and proper to draw attention in this place to some other, far more satisfactory attempts to reinterpret the traditional liturgy for modern worshipers. The distinguishing feature of these is that they are not *doctrinal* revisions, but straight translations, seeking rather to bring out in a contemporary idiom the underlying content of the ancient forms. One may

mention, for instance, Maurice Samuel's deservedly popular *Haggadah*, or the spirited and suggestive renderings by Jacob Sloan and Olga Marx in *The Language of Faith*.^{*} Especially noteworthy, however, among such attempts are Dr. Philip Birnbaum's translations of the Ashkenazic prayerbook[†] and Rabbi David de Sola Pool's of the Sephardic.^{**} Both of these works succeed triumphantly in bringing out the less obvious nuances and suggestions of the original; both are characterized—especially in the translation of Scriptural passages—by phrasing which is not only happy but also luminous (as, for instance, when Dr. Pool substitutes, for the traditional "He Who maketh peace in His high places," the excellent "He who creates the harmony of the spheres"; or when Psalm 94:20 comes out as, "Shall one in the seat of depravity, framing ruin by law, have fellowship with Thee?"). Almost every line of

these renderings is stamped with the impress of men who are sensitive to the larger possibilities of the Hebrew text and responsive to the deeper values of Jewish tradition—who can read the Prayerbook in the light of the ages and not only of a contemporary outlook, and who have seen in a refined scholarship an enlightenment of the eyes and not merely an exercise in academic pedantry.

Nevertheless, there is still need of a translation of the Prayerbook which will reproduce more clearly the various literary genres of its contents, which will find a medium, for example, for conveying the peculiar tone and complexion of the *piyyutim*, the allusive poetry of the Spanish school, the involutions of the Mishnaic passages, without reducing them to a misleading uniformity or disguising their true character behind Zangwillian ingenuity. This, it may be suggested, should be accomplished by collective effort, after the manner of the standard translations of the Bible—that is, by the collaboration of scholars, men of letters, and poets. Such a creative presentation of the ancient heritage might serve, indeed, as a welcome reassurance that, in its translation from the anxieties of the Old World to the security of the New, Judaism has nonetheless not forgotten the rock from which it was hewn.

^{*}*The Language of Faith: Selected Jewish Prayers*. Edited by Nahum N. Glatzer (Schocken Books, 1947).

[†]*Daily Prayer Book: Ha-Siddur Ha-Shalem* (New York, 1949); *High Holyday Prayer Book* (New York, 1951).

^{**}*Book of Prayer according to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*: (i) Daily and Sabbath; (ii) New Year; (iii) Atonement (New York, 1947-49).

EVE OF HOLY DAY

JACOB SLOAN

NODDING by the bed
Of her who bids me stay
Till she sleep again,
I lift my head and see
Upon the farther wall
Patches of torn lights—
Remnants of old swatches
From the ragman's bag:
Like this eve of holy day.

Moving bars of white
Draw across my eyes
From the train that pulls
The city through the night—
Past where I sit, stiff

With anger and restraint
At her whose fingers grip
Haven in my lap:
At this eve of holy day.

This child of my election
Holds me to a posture
I chose but cannot alter.
God I have abandoned
And am impaled on love.
I dare not move or answer
These tatters on my wall.
The fear I feared is on me:
And on this eve of holy day.

JACOB SLOAN is a familiar poet to the readers of COMMENTARY. A graduate of Brooklyn College and the College of Jewish Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary, he is the author of a book of verse, *Generation of Journey*.

TWO STORIES

MEYER LIBEN

The Winners

"HURRY up," said Mrs. Mandel to her husband, "we're already late."

"I'll be ready in a second," said Mr. Mandel. "Jackie isn't ready anyway."

"He's waiting for us outside," she answered, which meant (as she knew) that he had got into a ball game in the street and would probably have to wash all over again. He was twelve.

It wasn't usual for Mr. Mandel to be late this way, but he was not too anxious to visit the Josephs' who had just moved uptown into a large apartment house, with an elevator, only two blocks away from the Drive. This fact, this location, constituted a challenge to Mr. Mandel's earning power, a challenge which his wife did not fail to hurl at him on appropriate occasions.

Mr. Mandel was a furrier, highly skilled and (in the season) well paid. He and Mr. Josephs had worked together for a number of years till the latter had decided to go into business for himself, a move attended with many perils. After some difficult years, Mr. Josephs established himself in the trade, employing as many as thirty men in the busy season.

"Oh Jackie," said Mrs. Mandel, "just look at you!"

The boy, who had just run into the apartment, was good and dirty. Particularly outstanding was his shirt, which was darkly smudged, or stained.

"I fell," he explained.

By the time he was readied for the trip, Mr. Mandel had also whipped himself into readiness, and they left.

WHEN they reached the uptown apartment house, they had to ring downstairs and then they heard Mrs. Josephs' voice asking who it was. Jackie was intrigued, but Mr. Mandel refused to be impressed, saying: "Next we will have to prove who we are before we can get into his house."

Then they had to wait for the elevator, and inform the elevator man of their destination, and then walk down a long hall and ring the Josephs' bell.

"Hello," cried Mrs. Josephs, "come in."

And she swept them into the foyer; while she was hanging their coats Mr. Josephs came in and shook hands with the calmness, close to urbanity, which had always characterized his most formal social behavior.

Mrs. Mandel handed Mrs. Josephs the tin of candy which they had purchased on the way uptown, saying, "Lots of luck in your new apartment."

Mr. Mandel muttered something along the same lines and accepted in silence the thanks of Mr. and Mrs. Josephs.

They went into the living room. Carpeted from wall to wall, it had a set of furniture, including a china closet gleaming with cut glass.

"Davey," called out Mrs. Josephs, "Jackie is here."

The son, about Jackie's age, came out of a bedroom. He was by no means nattily dressed, and Jackie threw an angry, resentful look at his parents. Davey invited the guest into his room, and the two boys disappeared, but first Mrs. Josephs offered Jackie a dish full of macaroons and slices of honey cake and sponge cake. He chose a macaroon, and turned down the offer of a glass of milk.

"You have a very large living room," said Mrs. Mandel.

"It is very comfortable," said Mrs. Josephs. "Would you like to see the rest of the apartment?"

MEYER LIBEN's stories have appeared in the *New Directions Annual*, Cyril Connolly's *Horizon*, *Accent*, and other magazines. He was born in 1911, in New York City, and attended City College. He is now in business in New York.

This is an invitation which few have the courage to turn down.

Back in the living room, they looked out the window and Mrs. Mandel admired the view of the river.

"Yes," said Mr. Josephs, "it gives you a sense of distance, of repose."

He spoke in a rather manorial manner, proud but a little bored with the formalities.

Mr. Mandel could not help thinking that Mrs. Mandel was thinking of their apartment, quite adequate when they moved in, but now grown old and dark, old and crowded with the years.

Then they sat down and Mrs. Josephs placed before them a bowl of fruit, overflowing with oranges, apples, grapes, and some figs.

They picked and chose from this dish, and conversed—Mr. Josephs with Mr. Mandel, Mrs. Josephs with Mrs. Mandel.

They got onto the subject of politics, and then into that wider realm where economics and politics meet.

Mr. Mandel maintained that the standard of living was steadily rising and, given normal expansion, would continue to rise within the framework of capitalist society.

"And what is normal expansion?" asked Mr. Josephs. "Normal expansion is imperialism, normal expansion is war."

The dogged sectarianism of the socialist of 1926 was unflagging.

"You are too young," said Mr. Josephs, "to remember the depression of 1907. Otherwise you would understand how things shrank—capital, production, jobs, everything."

Mr. Mandel did not think that the seven-year seniority of the expanding manufacturer merited that rather supercilious tone.

"You do not have to lecture me about the depression of 1907," he said. "One does not have to experience completely in order to understand. Take death, for example."

At the mention of death, the two women looked up.

"The fact is," said Mr. Mandel, "that we emerged from the depression of 1907 stronger than ever and have been climbing ever since."

"You forget," said Mr. Josephs, "the small matter of the world war."

"Well," said Mr. Mandel, who had been a soldier in that war, "we got out of that too. Life progresses by upheaval, by no easy stages."

"By holocausts," said Mr. Josephs, "by one rigged Armageddon after another, by exploitation and the making of surplus value which then must be *shot* away."

"Exploitation," said Mr. Mandel pointedly, "begins at home."

"**L**ook, Mandel," said Josephs, "in business it is dog eat dog. Do you think I should let myself be pushed into the gutter? Do you think I can act what I believe and *survive*?"

"Pure *fakerei*," said Mr. Mandel. "You know what is the right thing and you can't do it, what would you expect of those who do not know the truth?"

"I am trying to tell you," said Mr. Josephs with an air of patience, "that life and theory do not belong together, it is an insoluble conflict; knowing the good, we must do the bad."

"Knowing what good?" asked Mr. Mandel. "This cockeyed notion of a millennium where the capitalist and the proletarian will lie down together? And meanwhile you milk the cow dry. Is that the good?"

"How many times," asked Mr. Josephs, "in how many ways must I tell you that we must *personally* operate against the greatest good? From this contradiction 20th-century man cannot escape."

"Tea," he said rather sharply, "let us have tea."

"Twentieth-century man *bubkes*," said Mr. Mandel. "You are only hiding your selfishness and your acquisitiveness behind a lot of high-sounding words. You are ten times worse than the boss who is out to get what he can but manages to be decent to his workers."

This comment referred to wage troubles which Mr. Josephs was having with his employees.

The tea being delivered, Mr. Josephs drank heavily from his glass.

"To maintain the production," he said, "I

must strike a certain balance between the profit and the expense."

Mr. Mandel laughed uproariously.

"Surplus value," he cried, "there's surplus value for you!"

Mr. Josephs put his glass down vigorously, so vigorously that some of the tea spilled onto the new rug.

"What are you doing?" cried Mrs. Josephs. "On the new rug!"

"It is only water," said Mr. Josephs.

"And tea," said Mrs. Josephs, "and sugar, and lemon."

Mr. Josephs was upset by the accidental, topical intrusion into the frame of historic necessity.

"All right," he said, "all right."

This little accident had the effect of slowing down the conversation; it was clear that the high point of sociability had been reached and passed. There remained the second glass of tea, the farewell, and the departure.

JUST at this time, when sociability had retreated, so to say, to a secondary level, a new diversion was created in the form of a series of cries, the sound of a struggle from the bedroom where the boys had been playing.

All looked up in surprise at this sudden outburst from a quarter which had been far too quiet all this time.

Then the door was pushed open and Jackie Mandel appeared, in the manner of a victor.

"I won the game," he said, "and he tried to take the winnings away from me."

"What game, what winnings?" cried Mrs. Josephs. "Where is Davey?"

Davey appeared in the doorway behind Jackie. He was bleeding lightly from the lip and whimpering. His mother rushed up to him and dabbed at the blood with a handkerchief.

"We were playing Monopoly," groaned Davey, as if in explanation.

"How come *you're* so, so—untouched?" Mrs. Josephs cried to the victorious youth.

"I learned that from Benny Leonard," said Jackie.

He held a make-believe microphone in front of him and shouted: "Hya mom. He never even touched me."

"That will be enough," said Mrs. Mandel, in the special tone of the mother of the victorious child, proud and as-if-chastising.

Mr. Josephs and Mr. Mandel stared at each other while the women fussed with the children, Mrs. Josephs binding up the wounds of her child, and Mrs. Mandel managing to find some hurt in the victorious child.

Mr. Josephs was stonily preoccupied, while Mr. Mandel, in his mind, was trying to formulate the phrase about the generations and shirtsleeves, got caught up in the rhythm of *from Moses to Moses there was only one Moses*, then smiled openly at the thought of making some comment about the famous triumvirate of *Tinker to Evers to Chance*.

But to his credit he kept his counsel, though Mr. Josephs was not unaware of the smile which passed over the face of his guest, and Mr. Josephs put the worst possible interpretation on that smile.

"Thank you very much for everything," said Mrs. Mandel. "Best luck and *naches* in your new apartment."

There was a rather formal handshake between the men, and then the Mandels left. Mrs. Josephs accompanied them to the elevator.

"Boy," said Jackie Mandel, "is he going to get it?"

"Quiet," said Mrs. Mandel, and Mr. Mandel looked agreeably at the child, on account of his victory, and because of the temporary respite from the complaining, the *nudging*, which would follow as a result of this victory.

The Pharmacist

MONROE HYMAN grew up in the secure knowledge that his means of livelihood had been laid out for him; like an ancestrally chosen bride, his occupation was waiting.

This occupation, or profession, was that of a pharmacist, and Monroe accepted it with a sense of inevitability which was the next

best thing to choose, though actually the furthest removed from it.

The knowledge was double-edged, for though it brought closer, within limits, the distant and mysterious future (so that Monroe was never at a loss when asked about his plans, but would solemnly say, "I am going to be a pharmacist"), it had the effect also of destroying the elements of doubt, openness, and thus it helped make of Monroe a rather solemn, not altogether pleasing boy. He was not very open to adventure, the impulse of the moment.

Still, as he grew older, this purposeful sobriety kept him on his destined road while his boyhood friends were tossed in all directions, ending up as millionaires, struggling merchants (independent), gangsters, and professional men.

He became a pharmacist, and found a job, through a relative's friend, in a drugstore on the upper West Side.

Here he found that the security in which he had grown up was shattered, and that he was at the mercy of his employer, an impatient old man who by no means controlled his temper because of his friendship for the friend of Monroe's relative.

Monroe labored in his cubbyhole in the back of the store, compounding his prescriptions with the conscientiousness which had always characterized him.

The old man, Krakauer, shuttled between the front and the back of the store; as the years went by, his heart was more and more in the over-the-counter sales.

One day, after Monroe had been in this place a little less than a year, there was a dramatic occurrence which shook him profoundly, creating an unusual disturbance, a terror.

MONROE was working on a prescription; Krakauer was at his side, sorting out some drugs. The front was empty. A customer entered.

"Go ahead," said Krakauer peevishly, "take care of the front."

Monroe obeyed his employer and went forth to meet the customer. This gentleman

was looking to buy a vaporizer, or at least he was looking to investigate the possibilities of buying a vaporizer. His questioning and close observation of the various models, his comments and comparisons, all without the slightest indications of purchase, unnerved the old man, who rushed to the front of the store, waving Monroe to the rear.

This pleased Monroe, who disliked selling and was happiest in his cubby compounding the prescriptions. He worked slowly and finished the prescription just as Krakauer stormed back, no more successful than Monroe in completing the sale, and blaming his assistant for starting the transaction *on the wrong foot*.

"You spoiled the sale," he said. "You confused him by showing him everything he asked for."

Monroe did not understand this remark.

"Here," called Krakauer to one of the kids who hung around waiting to run prescriptions, "deliver this."

He wrapped the prescription which Monroe had just finished and gave it to Zeck, one of the speediest of the messenger boys. Zeck took off as though he had been given the stick as the anchor man in a close relay race.

The store got a little busy, and Krakauer stayed up front. When things slowed down, he came back and continued his work. At this point Zeck came back and delivered the money.

"My God," cried Krakauer, "where is the mercury?" Monroe looked up, astonished.

The old man, in his rushing back and forth, had somehow got his hand into Monroe's prescription—at any rate, the mercury was missing, there was a good chance that this lethal dose had landed in the prescription made up for Mrs. Gordon.

The old man bolted, with Monroe in close pursuit.

"Watch the store," shouted Krakauer to Zeck. The redoubtable child found himself in charge of the establishment.

IN SPITE of the marked difference in age, the proprietor of the drugstore ran well ahead of his assistant, for the reason that he

knew the Gordon address, so that the younger and presumably faster man had to lay behind. The pair made a rather unusual picture as they ran through the streets. The old man had probably not run so fast in forty years. He could not regain the gait of his youth, and the awkwardness of his stride doubled the amount of exertion; his anxiety prevented him from calling out the address to Monroe, whose own anxiety prevented him from asking. The Gordons lived only a block away, on the fourth floor of an apartment house. The old man rushed up the stairs and burst into the apartment, followed by Monroe. They ran past the amazed Mr. Gordon and into the open bedroom where Mrs. Gordon was lying.

Mrs. Gordon was about seventy; she had run a grocery store with her husband for forty years and was not ignorant of the ways of the world.

Krakauer seized the little hinged box which stood on the bureau next to Mrs. Gordon's bed. He swiftly counted the pills. This accomplished, he closed his eyes in blissful weariness, his body relaxed to the point of limpness, and he opened his eyes, facing the company as an absolutely reborn person, with a new and unexpected outlook.

"What's the matter, Mrs. Gordon, you don't take your medicine, you don't trust the Doctor?"

Monroe too had counted the eight pills and he retreated to the corner of the room, experiencing active relief. The old man, Mr. Gordon, was somewhat dazed by the swiftness of the storm which had risen and then of the calm which had followed.

The old lady was very suspicious of this unaccountable behavior, and could not be mollified.

"What do you want?" she asked. "Why did you break into my house this way, without even ringing the bell? What is happening here?"

KRKAUER laughed hysterically, with the laugh of the saved, with the laugh of one who knows that the worst has passed, that what follows can be snarled, a little unpleas-

ant, but the dread outcome has been avoided.

"You are right," he said. "Of course I owe you an explanation. You see, these pills are not for you."

"Not for me?" repeated Mrs. Gordon. "What do you mean they're not for me? What are they doing here?"

"They *are* for you," said Mr. Krakauer. In the middle of saying that two prescriptions had been switched, he realized that this was the last possible thing to admit (next to the truth itself) and switched his story, on the wings of a brilliant idea.

"You see," he said, "Dr. Kornbluth called and said to add a little something, a sedative, to the prescription. But it was already made, so we came to get it back."

"Why a little sedative?" she asked.

"To make you sleep better," said the druggist, who was becoming more and more exhilarated by this tissue of lies which he was making up as he went along.

"I have no trouble sleeping," said the old lady, and she reached for the pills.

"No, no," cried Krakauer, as he and Monroe leaped desperately for the box, which was captured by the proprietor.

Mrs. Gordon settled back in her bed.

"What is it, poison in that box?" asked the old lady.

Krakauer laughed and looked meaningfully at the sober Monroe, who somehow joined in the laughter.

"You both had to come?" she asked. "To get the pills, to add the sedative?"

"It was such a nice day," said Krakauer, "I asked Monroe to take a walk with me."

"And who's taking care of the store?" she asked.

"Zeck," answered Krakauer, and a cloud crossed his face as he thought of what was going on down there.

"And if you were taking a walk on such a nice day," she continued, "why did you rush in like a pair of wild men?"

Krakauer was nonplussed, but Monroe said, quite idiotically: "We weren't sure it was the right apartment."

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon looked at each other helplessly.

"*A por mishugena*," said Mr. Gordon.

"Well, thank you," said Mr. Krakauer. "I will take this prescription and send over the new one in a few minutes."

"Maybe this time," said Mrs. Gordon, "you will close up the store altogether."

"Ah, Mrs. Gordon," said Krakauer, "such a tongue, like a sweet and sour pickle."

On this note Krakauer and Monroe left, the old druggist clutching the prescription box.

AFTER this experience, which, in spite of its happy ending, its deliriously happy ending, had a most sobering effect on Monroe, if it were at all possible for anything to have a sobering effect on a young man already steeped in sobriety to the point of stupefaction—after this experience Monroe was forced to consider again the basis of his security, and found it sadly wanting. On top of the perpetual menace of Krakauer, there was the ever present possibility of accidental poisoning of the customers. His conscientiousness, always extreme, now passed well beyond the bounds of normal caution. He insisted on a fixed space, a *cordon sanitaire*, where no one could penetrate, and especially not Krakauer. He dreamt

idly of going into business for himself, but found it difficult even to leave the corner where he labored, carefully compounding, for good or for bad, the medicine prescribed.

So there he sat, there he sits, a man more willed against than willing, quite incapable of movement. Of course he recognizes dimly that Krakauer will die some day, and then he will be faced with the problem of taking over the business, of leaving his narrow professional cubicle and moving onto the rough, the unpredictable economic seas. Or, of course, he can hire himself out again.

But meanwhile Krakauer is alive, he rushes from front to back, but the shuttle has slowed down, he spends most of his time in the beloved front of the store, where he can both sell and *shmoos*, leaving the rear, for the most part, to his associate, whose youth is gracelessly fading.

All that predestination, all that early serenity gone to waste!

"Here Monroe," says Krakauer, sliding a prescription slip through the cage where the younger man now works, "this must be ready in half an hour."

Monroe barely nods, moves the slip to the side, and continues, as meticulously as ever, on the tasks so early chosen for him.

T. S. ELIOT'S LATEST POETIC DRAMA

Where Are the Eagles and the Trumpets? . . .

SPENCER BROWN

WHEN the headmaster tells a joke, all the boys laugh.

For at least twenty years T. S. Eliot has been the headmaster of modern literature. He has taken himself seriously as poet and critic. A generation of boys have gone forth from his school uttering the staccato laments, the allusive scraps (*parturiunt montes . . . disiecti membra poetarum*), and the hushed, clerical incantation that identify the alumni of Old Waste Land. Now, like the headmaster who has begun telling jokes, he writes plays. First it was a religious tragedy, as might have been expected; then a somewhat classical tragedy, with the Furies lurking behind drawing-room curtains; then a religious "comedy," a chief character being crucified near an anthill; and now a farce, complete with switching of illegitimate babies.

As Mr. Eliot has taken himself further and further from his proper job, the plays have got steadily worse. The latest is *The Confidential Clerk*.

None of the depressing effect of this piece can be attributed to the performance currently at the Morosco Theater. People like Ina

Claire, Claude Rains, and Aline MacMahon simply cannot achieve less than excellence; Newton Blick, as the retired confidential clerk, gives every gesture and phrase a polish that makes him a playwright's dream of an actor; Joan Greenwood and Richard Newton are less satisfactory only because of the even more difficult material they work with; and if Douglas Watson, as the confidential clerk himself, registers chiefly an uncomfortable smile, it is probably because he has looked too deeply into his part. E. Martin Browne's skilful direction is almost able to suggest that two and one-half acts of vapor and one-half act of action make a play. No, the suspicion that Mr. Eliot got better than he deserved becomes a certainty after one has read the text.*

THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK is a farce written in loose, or limp, blank verse. A tradition has already been established that one may not discuss the play without first making himself foolish by outlining the plot; I suppose this is Mr. Eliot's anticipatory revenge on critics. In any case—Sir Claude Mulhammer has hired as confidential clerk (or private secretary) one Colby Simpkins, who he believes is his illegitimate son. They soon discover they have disappointment as well as blood in common, for Sir Claude, a successful financier, is a frustrated potter and Colby has given up a career as a second-rate organist. Sir Claude's illegitimate daughter, Lucasta, is engaged to B. Kaghan, a bright and brash businessman of unknown parentage, who impresses Lady Elizabeth Mulhammer as "undistinguished." Lady Elizabeth has borne one wild oat, a son who was "mis-laid"

THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK, now running with mixed acclaim in London and New York, is the latest of the dramas which the English-speaking world's foremost poet has been offering in his second career as sage and seer in the realm of social, political, and religious ideas and affairs. SPENCER BROWN, one of our own highly regarded critics, here examines the new play, its ideas, and its art, in the light of those that have gone before. Mr. Brown teaches English literature at the Fieldston School in New York City. He was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1909, and is a graduate of Harvard. Our last issue included his article "The Hot War Over Our Schools."

**The Confidential Clerk*. A play by T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace, 159 pp., \$3.00.

after the father's death. Colby is attracted to Lucasta, but any danger of incest is averted in ample time by the revelation of his supposed origin. Lady Elizabeth, a flighty woman, taking a fancy to Colby (or, one would like to think, resenting the two-to-one score in her husband's favor), wishes to prove that Colby is her long lost son, not Sir Claude's.

Eggerson, the retired confidential clerk who is up on all these past indiscretions, summons Mrs. Guzzard, the Little Buttercup of the piece, to enlighten everybody. One of the oracular Eliot characters who have a direct pipeline to the Infinite, she reveals that B. Kaghan (the "B." is for Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, according to the Bible, *the son of consolation*) is Lady Elizabeth's little accident. This leaves Colby to be explained; he would like his mother to rest in peace and prefers, instead of Sir Claude, a dead, obscure father whom he will have to reconstruct from pictures and letters. Mrs. Guzzard gratifies his wish by admitting that he is her son—as a mother she is dead to him, since she has posed as his aunt—by a disappointed musician, now dead. Colby then resolves to fulfil his destiny as a second-rate organist, is offered a post by the obliging Eggerson, who turns out to be a churchwarden, and is taken home to live with him and Mrs. E. (their son was "lost in action, and his grave unknown"). But Eggerson predicts that Colby will not be an organist long: he has another vocation, the Church—and we catch the aura of a pun on the word *clerk*. The score now tied at one-all, Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth are left frustrated in parenthood as in life.

AS CAN be seen from the plot, *The Confidential Clerk* might be a farce, but it is never more than mildly amusing. Mixups among illegitimate children of prominent families can produce, in other hands, a good bit of naughty humor. Yet aside from an implied recognition of sex as necessary to create the material for the mixups, Mr. Eliot is not interested in sex: his taste is what is usually described as impeccable. In fact, in direct contrast to his early poems, it is just his

lack of vulgarity that prevents the play from living. In the Sweeney poems and in *The Waste Land* he achieves much of his effect by deliberately setting the sordid, the tawdry, the obscene, against beauty of phrase or allusion. The lesson once learned, he has forgotten it.

*The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,*

*And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid siftings fall
To stain the stiff dishonored shroud.*

With its wonderful consonant patterns, this is of course better poetry than anything in *The Confidential Clerk*; it is also more dramatic, for the nightingales who commit a nuisance, like pigeons in the public park, are real nightingales at a real murder. But Mr. Eliot is determined that no impurity shall contaminate the distilled water he now bids us quaff.

As can also be seen from the plot, the play provides abundant opportunity for the humor of situation. But at every such opportunity Mr. Eliot behaves like an end who has caught a forward pass in a clear field and then stands wondering what to do; even before the tacklers arrive, he slips and falls. In the middle of the second act, where the play at last begins to shudder into motion, comes Colby's recognition that he and Lucasta, unknown to her, are brother and sister. Although Lucasta's reaction to what she fancies is his horror at her illegitimacy verges on the dramatic, Mr. Eliot makes no comic capital of the scene. A few minutes later, when Sir Claude and his wife each claim Colby as a son—obviously not cooperatively—we have a scene pregnant with mirth. It terminates, however, only in what may be called a still-mirth: for when Colby, who has stood with his back to both the well-bred altercation and the audience, finally turns round, we expect the explosive wisecrack, or the genteel but edged epigram, or the comic confession that he is bored and doesn't care; we get instead a

long and puzzled speech indicating that he feels numb. So do we.

BOTH here and in the characters' quasi-tragic bewilderment at Mrs. Guzzard's sepulchral revelations, we are therefore led to believe *The Confidential Clerk* is a serious play. To this end, however, Mr. Eliot must create real people. And in all his plays he has done so only once—with Becket, in *Murder in the Cathedral*, where history supplied him with a hero ready-made. A study of the others discloses no one we can conscientiously call human. For example, Harry, the protagonist in *The Family Reunion*, is simply a figure who has murdered his unpleasant wife and is driven by more or less palpable Furies to expiate his crime by a long journey—perhaps as a missionary. Amy, his mother, whose tyranny is mostly responsible for the family curse, is an old woman afraid of the dark, afraid the old clock may stop. But the clock does stop in the dark before she can become more than a symbol. Her sister Agatha is a shadowy creation, part character and part chorus, muttering dark, ambiguous warnings to herself and encouragements to Harry on his unspecified quest.

The Family Reunion, however, has a somber dignity and—in Agatha's speeches, though not in the mannered and verbose choruses—some beautiful poetry. These flaws Mr. Eliot, by studiously applying himself to the technique of dramatic writing managed to expunge altogether from *The Cocktail Party*. This comedy (the word being used, I trust, in the Dantesque sense) uses the device of a figure who seems to be a psychiatrist, talks like a priest, and acts like God to rearrange the lives of a husband and wife and their lovers (one each). The married couple accept the destiny of living together; the boy, a superficial type, goes off to make movies; and the girl, who has hitherto shown no religious leanings, swiftly becomes a nun and is gruesomely martyred after nursing natives on a remote island. Clearly these are puppets intended to demonstrate various "vocations" in and out of the world; they are manipulated by thin lines of verse emanating

from Mr. Eliot through the psychiatrist, who is himself only a superior puppet. The one character who runs the risk of becoming real—Julia, a scatterbrained busybody—is turned back to wood in the second act: she is, it seems, in cahoots with the psychiatrist and wafts other puppets into his network of strings.

Unreality of character becomes monumental in *The Confidential Clerk*. At the conclusion, it is true, Sir Claude shows a rather pathetic disappointment and dependency in trying to persuade Colby to stay on as a friend if not as a son. But Mr. Eliot, having loitered through everything else, hurries over this, the best scene of the play, in order to clean things up and push Colby toward the Church. The preceding scene, Colby's great recognition of his real parents, is pathetic in another sense. Earlier, Colby has envied Kaghan the good luck of having at least foster parents; but he himself has had his "aunt" and has been very fond of her. When he finds she is his mother, he simply doesn't react to her at all. He goes about his father's business. Colby may be meant to be unresponsive (Lucasta analyzes him at length, and Kaghan says, "We wanted Colby to be something he wasn't"); but if so, the playwright should effect a contrast and surround Colby with vivid people.

NEVERTHELESS, we may be doing Mr. Eliot an injustice by studying his play as a play. Perhaps it is intended to be something else, a religious or philosophical discussion in dramatic form. If so, he can hardly object if we scrutinize what he is trying to say. He begins by implying, through Sir Claude and Colby, that one should reject a career at which he will be second-rate in favor of a career that is uncongenial but will bring him a sense of power. At the close of the play, on the other hand, Mr. Eliot suggests that wisdom lies in devoting oneself to one's real desire, even if it entails being second-rate—though here there is the calculated ambiguity of Colby's vocation for Holy Orders, for in the service of God there is no first- or second-rate, but only the success of doing one's best.

There is also, in Colby and even more in Lucasta, a deal of adolescent groping with the concept of understanding people, and of understanding them as they change. Of this kind of talk, in such a context, the less said the better. There is also some undistinguished talk about the symbolism of gardens: Eggerson has a real garden, where he grows beetroots for Mrs. E., and everybody else has a secret and symbolic garden, where at times God walks. And the characters seek an escape from living into reality, perhaps the reality of pure form in art. There is also—and I think this is the center of the play, if it has any—the foundling fantasy of Lady Elizabeth. We all, she says, look beyond our heredity for an explanation of our uniqueness; its source must lie in God. Reverence for a father, seen in Colby and Sir Claude, must be reverence for a God-surrogate.

These are ideas, and some of them may be profound. But I refuse to abet a false dichotomy between thought and style. Unless Mr. Eliot has clothed these ideas in appropriate majesty, then we do an injustice to ourselves in imagining that his play is profound.

TO EXAMINE this question, let us first make another false dichotomy, between wit and poetry. Mr. Eliot's wit has often been praised (even, we may infer in his *Lines for an Old Man*, by Mr. Eliot himself): the critics almost unanimously find in the plays a wit that they cautiously describe as civilized.

Let us hear this civilized wit. Lucasta, supposedly not a stupid girl, is speaking:

*Can you believe
That I've never been to a concert in my life?
I only go to shows when somebody invites
me,
And no one has ever invited me to a concert.
I've been to the Opera, of course, several
times,
But I'm afraid I never really listened to the
music:
I just enjoyed going—to see the other people,
And to be seen there! And because you feel
out of it*

If you never go to the Opera, in the season.

Or these lines from *The Cocktail Party*, spoken by Reilly, the nearly omniscient psychiatrist:

*But let me tell you, that to approach the
stranger
Is to invite the unexpected, release a new
force,
Or let the genie out of the bottle.
It is to start a train of events
Beyond your control.*

Or these, also from *The Cocktail Party*:

*You no longer feel quite human.
You're suddenly reduced to the status of an
object—
A living object, but no longer a person.
It's always happening, because one is an
object
As well as a person. But we forget about it
As quickly as we can. When you've dressed
for a party
And are going downstairs, with everything
about you
Arranged to support you in the role you have
chosen,
Then sometimes, when you come to the
bottom step
There is one step more than your feet ex-
pected
And you come down with a jolt. Just for a
moment
You have the experience of being an object
At the mercy of a malevolent staircase.
Or, take a surgical operation.
In consultation with the doctor and the
surgeon,
In going to bed in the nursing home,
In talking to the matron, you are still the
subject,
The center of reality. But, stretched on the
table,
You are a piece of furniture in a repair shop
For those who surround you, the masked
actors;
All there is of you is body
And the "you" is withdrawn.*

Since these passages are certainly not dramatic, they must have been intended as either wit or poetry or both.

*There is no doubt whatever
That Mr. Eliot hits the nail on the head.
He drives it home with a repetitive diligence
That mangles the wood for a foot around it.
Where another man with a reputation for
wit
Would leap dexterously from point to point,
Mr. Eliot marches directly through his gar-
dens,
Crushing the violets with his precise, planti-
grade tread.
When the headmaster tells a joke, all the
boys laugh,
But they would never accept this stuff from
any one else.
One is tempted to wonder how he became
headmaster.*

The material comes by the yard—or rather, by the five-foot length, though it doesn't matter if your ruler is off or if your hand slips eighteen inches or so. That makes the language more natural and colloquial. Or makes it, perhaps, prose.

Nobody doubts that Mr. Eliot writes exceedingly well. The sentences in his comedies are carefully modulated and have a quiet rhythm. The rhythm, however, is the rhythm of prose. Although I listened to *The Confidential Clerk* with the same attention that I ordinarily reserve for Shakespeare, I heard as verse only about fifteen lines out of roughly twenty-five hundred in the play. I can only conclude that the division into so-called lines of verse is mere affectation, and Mr. Eliot ought to abandon it. If he wants to write a play in prose, let him do so. Then the critics may judge it as a play, divested of the adventitious awe attendant on a famous poet, a poet moreover endowed with marvelous skill in turning a line—witness such poems as *Ash Wednesday*, *Prufrock*, and (occasionally) *Four Quartets*.

IF MR. ELIOT, by common consent, possesses this mastery and in addition flexibility in

using colloquial language in his poems, why cannot he achieve poetry in his plays? I think the reason is that he has perfected only the voice of Mr. Eliot: in each successful poem, through whatever mask he speaks, we hear his own voice, his moral earnestness, his world-weariness, his faith. Preoccupation with his own spiritual problems has rendered him unable—with one exception, the *prose* apology of the assassins in *Murder in the Cathedral*—to speak in any voice but his own, unable to interest himself in general human emotions, unable to live imaginatively in another person and so to create a living character. Hence his verse, which can rise to either satirical snarl or religious exaltation, is the verse not of speech—not even, like Robert Frost's, of local speech—but of his own speech. Hence there is not only more poetry but also more drama in one of Frost's narrative poems than in an Eliot comedy. Hence *The Confidential Clerk* is worse than a failure; it is a mistake, because it forces us to look back at Mr. Eliot's poems and see, through their astonishing fragmentary brilliance, their artificial structure and essential narrowness.

Even as prose, *The Confidential Clerk* is flat. Set any page of it beside any page of *Major Barbara* or *Androcles and the Lion* or *Heartbreak House* and see it flicker into dullness against Shaw's pitiless floodlights; or, if you prefer genteel comedy in novels that also switch illegitimate babies, set it beside a page of Ivy Compton-Burnett, whose wit is cutting and memorable because she sees evil underneath civilized exteriors.

Mr. Eliot's plays, for all his theological convictions, have no real sense of evil. In the poems written before his conversion, he contemplated with horror the face of evil—and also had a suspicious horror of sex. In the plays written when he had become an Anglo-Catholic, in spite of a great deal of talk about evil in *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Family Reunion* and a persisting sex-horror in the latter, evil is rendered nugatory by the victory of God. Becket is only ritually assassinated; in *The Cocktail Party*, "all manner of thing shall be well"; in *The Confi-*

dential Clerk, after adultery and the perfectly callous abandonment of children legitimate and illegitimate, the destruction of hopes is not retribution but inconvenience.

The full measure of Mr. Eliot's failure can be seen by contrasting the longer passage I quoted from *The Cocktail Party* with the description of a toothache in Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*. Dostoevsky's speaker takes obscene delight in showing how physical suffering makes him not only a thing but a beast: by his moans he will torture those around him. And though we know that part of this nastiness is rooted in his horrifying character, we also know we share his bestiality enough to make the description hit home. Here is reality, here is evil that Mr. Eliot can apparently no longer delineate, and certainly does not delineate in his plays.

It is ironic, and a little sad, that the man who is by critical acquiescence the most important poet now writing in English should produce comedy so barren of wit, verse so prosaic even in its rhythm, and drama so remote from human reality. He has fallen

victim, it seems to me—perhaps unconsciously through a sense of his own mission—to the tradition dating back at least to Samuel Johnson (a more vigorous literary headmaster) that poets must try to write plays. Byron, Keats, Shelley, Browning, Tennyson, Swinburne, Hardy, even Hopkins—all these, and others, approach the task with humility; they take advice, vainly, from actors and managers, men whose intellectual equipment they would ordinarily scorn. And they produce nothing that is practicable drama.

In accordance with this tradition, Mr. Eliot achieves an unintentional poignancy in the otherwise flaccid lines about Sir Claude's vocation to be a second-rate potter and Colby's to be a second-rate organist. That our literary colossus, crowned with the Nobel wreath and so superbly self-assured in his perverse poetic craft that he will solemnly reprint, along with his completed work, such fragments as another poet would consign to the wastebasket without a quiver, that this man should feel so strong a vocation to be a second-rate playwright teaches us something about human fallibility.

IN THE HOUSE

LEAH GOLDBERG

"I HAVE forgotten," the sister said.
The brother said, "I do not recall."
"I'll never forgive," the father said.
The bride said, "I've forgiven all."
Silent the mother peered through the
blinds:
Long is the road and far it winds.

"The wind is rising," the sister said.
The brother said, "O hear the rain."
"Locked is the door," the young bride said.
"None," said the father, "shall unlock it
again."
Silent the mother walked to and fro:
God in heaven, how cold the winds blow.

"There are five of us," the sister said.
The brother said, "Let us sit and dine."
"Come," said the bride, "the table is laid."
The father said, "I shall pour the wine."
Silent the mother bowed her head,
In five parts broke the Sabbath bread.

The sister nibbled her crumbs like a mouse,
The brother sopped his bread, the bride
Toasted the mistress of the house,
The father ate his bread and sighed.
Then up rose the mother and drew back
the chain,
And opened the door to the wind and the
rain.

THIS is the third poem COMMENTARY has published by LEAH GOLDBERG, distinguished Israeli contemporary. The translation from the Hebrew, as before, is by Robert Friend.

THE LESSON OF YALTA

The Cost of By-Passing Democratic Process

G. F. HUDSON

ONLY nine years have passed since the Yalta conference, but already it seems an enormously long time ago. The photographs of the Big Three seated together appear today to belong to as remote a past as representations of Pharaohs on the walls of Egyptian temples or figures in the Bayeux Tapestry. It is difficult indeed now to recapture to the atmosphere of those far-off days when, as Robert Sherwood tells us in *The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins*:

The mood of the American delegates, including Roosevelt and Hopkins, could be described as one of supreme exultation as they left Yalta. They were confident that their British colleagues agreed with them that this had been the most encouraging conference of all, and the immediate response of the principal spokesmen for British and American public opinion added immeasurably to their sense of satisfaction with the job that had been done.

If in 1954 there are few people who can see cause for satisfaction, and still less for

exultation, in what was done at Yalta, it has to be remembered that we have the advantage of hindsight and there is always force in the proverb that it is easy to be wise after the event. Certainly there are some politicians who today most loudly condemn the Yalta decisions, but were hardly conspicuous in protest at the time. On the other hand, account must also be taken of the fact that the American and British governments had at their disposal information which was not then available to the general public or even to Congressmen and Members of Parliament—information which pointed very definitely to the long-term aims of Soviet policy. The historian who would arrive at a fair estimate of the Yalta record must try to avoid being prejudiced by the experience of the years since February 1945, but he must at the same time ask how far the hopes set on Yalta were reasonable in the light of the evidence the Western statesmen then already had before their eyes.

THE case on their behalf was recently made, though not without substantial concessions to the critics, in an editorial of the *New York Times* (January 24, 1954):

WITH our statesmen embarking upon a new period of negotiations with the USSR, American public opinion continues anxiously to review the episode of Yalta, in search of lessons to guide us in the present. G. F. HUDSON, distinguished Oxford historian and political analyst of the *London Economist*, here documents his view that the fundamental mistake the West made with Stalin—one that helped keep the Russians in Central Europe and open the gates of China to the Communists—was in abandoning democratic international relations and the Anglo-American tradition of checks-and-balances. Professor Hudson is a frequent contributor to these pages, his last previous appearance being "The Return to Wishful Thinking" in January of this year. He has written several books on Far Eastern affairs, and during the war he served in the British Foreign Office.

Yalta was a wartime conference at which some good agreements, some bad agreements, and some indifferent agreements were made. It was a grievous error that the whole of these agreements was not public or at least communicated to the Senate. It was a grievous error to promise the Soviet Union rights that belonged to the Nationalist Government of China. But Yalta was also a prelude to the United Nations; at Yalta Russia agreed with the other conferees on free elections with secret ballot in Poland and other lands plundered by the Nazis. If Russia had honorably and honestly carried out its part of the agreements, Yalta might be remembered with reasonable satisfaction. In any case there is every reason to suppose that under the cir-

cumstances that existed in early 1945 the Senate would have ratified the Yalta understanding for what then seemed to be the supremely important purpose of getting Soviet Russia into the war against Japan.

Three points are made in this argument: first, that some of the agreements made at Yalta were harmless, or even beneficial; second, that the agreements about Poland and other East European countries were in themselves just and only went wrong because of violations by Russia; and third, that the agreement about China was justified—or would at least have been endorsed by the Senate—because of the imperative need for inducing Russia to join in the war against Japan. The first of these points cannot be taken very seriously. The charge against the Western statesmen is, to put it briefly, that they yielded to Russia the sovereign rights of two allied nations, Poland and China, without the consent of their recognized governments, thereby violating the principles on which the policy of the Western Powers was supposed to be based and facilitating the expansion of Communist power which has been the great disaster of the postwar period. In relation to this charge it is irrelevant to plead that Russia was at the same time persuaded to join the United Nations or to permit France to participate in the military occupation of Germany, just as it would be unhelpful for a man accused of murder to try to extenuate his crime by saying that on the same day that he killed his victim he also contributed generously to the funds of his local church.

Even if the various Yalta agreements are regarded as a single whole in which concessions were traded each way, it would still remain a matter for condemnation that the leaders of the Western democracies treated the sovereignties of their allies as diplomatic trading assets. If these acts are to be justified at all, it must be by showing either that the vital interests of Poland and China were somehow safeguarded, at any rate on paper, or else that their sacrifice was required by overwhelming military necessity in the struggle against Germany and Japan.

ON POLAND, Harry Hopkins has recorded, in notes of a conversation between Roosevelt, Eden, and himself as far back as March 1943, that "the President said that, after all, the big powers would have to decide what Poland should have, and that he, the President, did not intend to go to the Peace Conference and bargain with Poland or the other small states; as far as Poland is concerned, the important thing is to set it up in a way that will help maintain the peace of the world." This attitude was curiously similar to that advocated in the same month by the Soviet Ambassador, who told Hopkins that "he felt that Great Britain and the United States should decide what was to be done about Poland and 'tell them' rather than ask them."

This talk of Great Power dictation to Poland was less than two years after the promulgation of the Atlantic Charter, in which Roosevelt and Churchill had declared it to be their policy to restore sovereignty to countries that had been deprived of it by the war. Already, it seems, wartime habits had inclined the President towards a distinctly arrogant and peremptory attitude towards weaker Allied nations, which was in striking contrast to his desire to soothe and conciliate the Soviet Union. By November of 1944, three months before the Yalta conference, his views on the Polish question are thus recorded by Arthur Bliss Lane, who had an interview with him after being appointed American Ambassador to Poland:

I observed that the Soviet view of an independent Poland was quite different from our conception. The President stated that he had entire confidence in Stalin's word and he felt sure that he would not go back on it. I said that I regretted I could not agree with him, as Stalin's previous actions had shown him not to be dependable. . . . Mr. Roosevelt said that he thought Stalin's idea of having a *cordon sanitaire* in the shape of a Poland under Russian influence, as a bulwark to protect the Soviet Union . . . was understandable; Stalin himself had pointed out to the President that after World War I the Allies had formed a *cordon sanitaire* . . . to protect them from the threat of Bolshevism and now he claimed a corresponding right to protect himself from the West.

Roosevelt was apparently unable to see that there was no valid analogy between the so-called *cordon sanitaire* of the years after World War I and what Stalin was doing in Poland in the autumn of 1944. It is true that in the former period the states along the western border of the Soviet Union—Finland, the Baltic States, and Poland, which had been formed in whole or in part from the territory of the old Russian empire, together with Rumania, which had annexed Besarabia—had an intense fear and distrust of the new Communist Russia and were regarded by conservative politicians in Western Europe as a convenient barrier against the westward expansion of Soviet power. But their governments were not imposed on them by French or British military occupation, and far from being obedient satellites, they often acted in a manner of which London and Paris strongly disapproved. Stalin, on the other hand, having invaded and seized half the territory of Poland in 1939 in alliance with Nazi Germany and deported some 10 per cent of its population to Arctic Russia, Siberia, and Central Asia, had now in 1944 placed Russian-occupied Poland under the rule of a group of Polish Communists and their stooges, while the NKVD imprisoned or executed supporters of the Polish government-in-exile which had been recognized by the United States and Britain as legally representing the Polish state ever since the joint German-Russian conquest of the country.

Roosevelt must have been well aware of this situation, but he preferred to indulge his private vision of a postwar world controlled by a benevolent directorate of Great Powers—a fancy in which he was encouraged by amateur and unofficial advisers. Warned of Stalin's ambitions of European domination, he replied: "I just have a hunch that Stalin isn't that kind of a man. Harry tells me he's not and that he doesn't want anything but security for his country. I think that if I give him everything I possibly can and ask for nothing in return, he won't try to annex anything and will work with me for a world of peace and democracy."

It is clear that if Roosevelt was thus convinced that Stalin wanted nothing but security for his country, and if he found it so "understandable" that Stalin claimed a Poland "under Russian influence" as his *cordon sanitaire*, he could have no strong objection to Soviet nomination of Polish cabinet ministers as a means of insuring this influence. Indeed, had it not been for the agitation carried on in the United States by the Polish-American Congress and a certain restiveness in Congress, it seems doubtful whether Roosevelt would have made any difficulty at all about transferring diplomatic recognition to the Lublin Committee in its original form. Certainly he did not feel himself restrained from so doing by any considerations of international law, for during the Yalta conference, according to Stettinius, who is not a hostile witness, he declared that "he did not attach much importance to the continuity or legality of any Polish Government, since he felt that for some years there had been in reality no Polish Government." In comment on this astonishing statement it is only necessary to point out that since September 1939 President Roosevelt's administration had concluded several formally signed treaties with the government which he claimed at Yalta had never really existed.

CHURCHILL's attitude to Poland was widely different from Roosevelt's, and yet in practice it converged with his towards the same outcome of surrender to Russian demands. Where Roosevelt saw Stalin as a just and good man who only wanted security for his country, Churchill saw him as an irresistible conqueror of Eastern Europe and held that only by abject submission to his demands could the Poles expect to retain even a fraction of their independence. In Moscow, in October 1944, he told Romer, the Foreign Minister of the Polish government-in-exile, that "Poland is threatened with virtual extinction and would be effaced as a nation" unless the Polish government agreed forthwith to cede to the Soviet Union nearly a half of Poland's pre-war territory and amalgamate with the Lublin Committee, the

latter's terms for the coalition being that the Communists should have three-quarters of the Cabinet seats, including control of the army and police.

Churchill's attitude was a strictly "realist" one; the Poles were faced with overwhelming force, and nobody was in a position to help them, so they must submit in the hope of obtaining some mitigation of the conqueror's terms. But Churchill's pressure on the Polish government to capitulate to Russia was not inspired by any illusions about Communism; on the contrary, Churchill was very much aware of the Communist menace in Europe at a time when the American government was totally blind to it, and he did not hesitate to oppose it wherever he had military force available. In November 1944 British troops were used to turn back Communist armed bands marching on Brussels for a *coup d'état* (similar Communist plans in France having been forestalled by the action of General de Gaulle); in Athens in December, British opposition to seizure of power by the Greek Communists led to severe and prolonged fighting.

There was no support from Washington for these anti-Communist moves; the British intervention in Greece evoked a storm of criticism in the American press and the official attitude was adverse to it. In spite of the lack of American cooperation, Churchill succeeded in preventing Communist domination of Greece—which would have involved the encirclement and subjugation of Turkey as well—but he was only able to obtain a free hand in Greece as far as Russia was concerned by an agreement recognizing similar Russian rights of temporary administration in Rumania and Bulgaria. Although Poland was not specifically included in this demarcation of zones of influence, it was implied that the Russians could arrange matters as they pleased where they had actual military occupation, and thereafter it was difficult to reassert any general principles applicable to all European countries. In saving Greece, Churchill had in effect written off the rest of Eastern Europe.

The memoirs of Stettinius bear witness to

the pessimism of Churchill just before the Yalta conference. Of his meeting with Churchill at Malta on the way to the Crimea, Stettinius writes:

During the course of conversation Churchill expressed utter dismay at the outlook of the world. He said that there were probably more units of suffering among humanity as of this hour, while we were meeting, than ever before in history. As he looked out on the world, he added, it was one of sorrow and bloodshed. It was his opinion that future peace, stability, and progress depended on Great Britain and the United States remaining in close harmony at all times.

The pessimism of Churchill, however, worked against the cause of Polish independence no less than the optimism of Roosevelt did. The only difference was that, whereas Roosevelt could see no harm in a Soviet *cordon sanitaire* covering Eastern Europe, Churchill regarded it as an evil which could not be prevented. Moreover, his resolve not to get out of step with America if he could avoid it inclined him to give way on issues combining Roosevelt and Stalin against him.

SHORTLY before the Yalta meeting, and in spite of a personal appeal from Roosevelt not to take such action before the conference, Stalin had formally recognized the Communist-controlled Lublin Committee as the *de jure* government of Poland. As both the United States and Britain still recognized the Polish government-in-exile in London—which had the allegiance of all the Polish armed forces operating in Western Europe—the Soviet move was a provocative challenge to them and they could not simply transfer recognition to the puppet regime without appearing to submit to Soviet pressure. There was enough sympathy and support for Poland both in America and in Britain to make it politically risky for the American and British governments to accept the Russian *fait accompli* in Poland unless they could present to their own peoples some appearance of having reached a compromise on the subject. They must be able plausibly to claim that they had not recognized the Lublin

Committee, but had got Russia to agree to a new coalition government.

This, however, was only a matter of show for domestic consumption in America and Britain. The deeper political issue was whether the American and British leaders could in fact do anything to alter the situation created by Russian policy and restore the national independence of Poland. They had one high card to play—their power to grant or withhold recognition. Since Poland was under Russian military occupation, they could not directly intervene there, but they could declare that they would not transfer diplomatic recognition from the Polish government-in-exile to any newly created Polish authority until free elections had been held in Poland to ascertain the wishes of the Polish people.

Such a stand would have put Stalin in a dilemma, for he would either have to allow free elections—which, as he well knew, would give his puppets only a small minority of the votes cast—or dispense indefinitely with Western recognition for the regime he had set up in Poland. That he attached importance to Western recognition, in spite of his own monopoly of force in Poland, was shown by the intensity of the diplomatic pressure he brought to bear on the Western statesmen to accord it.

His armies had overrun vast areas of Eastern Europe outside the pre-war boundaries of the Soviet Union and were followed by the terrorist detachments of the NKVD; everywhere they had the aid of groups of local Communists with a miscellaneous following of dupes, opportunists, and adventurers. But they were faced with the massive hostility of popular feeling which relied on the moral support of the Western Allies against Russian domination and hoped for better times when the war was over. To break the passive resistance of the conquered peoples, to reduce them to apathy and despair, and to turn their sentiments against the West, Stalin needed Western recognition of his puppet governments, and particularly the abandonment of that unsubdued Polish national leadership which had directed the

heroic resistance of Poland to Nazi conquest ever since the beginning of the war.

IF ROOSEVELT and Churchill had seriously hoped or intended to restore the independence of Poland, they would have made the transfer of diplomatic recognition to a new Polish government conditional on the actual holding of free elections in Poland, not on a mere promise to hold them. Instead they agreed, in a document which made no mention of the Polish government with which they were still in diplomatic relations, that “the Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland (i.e. the Lublin Committee) should be recognized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad”; that this “reorganized” government “shall be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot”; and that the government thus pledged should be recognized forthwith by the three Great Powers without waiting for the elections to be held. The government which after long negotiations was eventually formed and recognized by America and Britain as fulfilling the terms of the Yalta agreement kept a majority of the cabinet seats for ex-members of the Lublin Committee and retained the key ministries of Public Security and Defense—with control of the police and army respectively—in Communist hands, while the Soviet citizen Bierut was left as head of the Polish state.

The elections which were to have been held “as soon as possible” were not held until January 1947, and then they were rigged by the Communists with every conceivable device of violence, intimidation, and fraud. By that time, however, the Polish Communist regime had enjoyed the fruits of *de jure* recognition for a year and a half, and the shameless violation of the pledge on condition of which it had originally been recognized did not cause either the American or the British government to withdraw its ambassador from Warsaw.

It must be emphasized that the Big Three

at Yalta did not guarantee free elections in Poland or undertake any responsibility for supervising them; they only required a pledge of free elections from the Polish Communists. In view of the violence and terror which then already prevailed in Poland, it is incredible that any Western statesman or diplomat could seriously have believed that such a pledge was of any value without some machinery for supervision to which Russia would be legally committed. But Russia was not committed to anything. The Polish Communists alone gave the pledge and they alone broke it; the Big Three bore no formal responsibility in the matter.

THE agreement on Poland and the effect subsequently given to it deprived of all significance the high-sounding generalizations of the "Declaration on Liberated Europe" which was also signed at Yalta. The principles enunciated in this declaration were admirable, but nobody in Eastern Europe could expect that they would be applied otherwise than according to the precedent of what had been done in Poland. If the Western Powers had accepted the accomplished fact of a Soviet puppet regime in Poland without insisting on previous elections or on more than an ineffective minority representation for non-Communist parties in the government, what reason was there to anticipate that they could or would do more for Rumania or Hungary or Czechoslovakia or Bulgaria? The Yalta decisions necessarily broke the back of opposition to Communist rule, not only in Poland, but in every country that had been or was about to be overrun by Russian armies.

What, then, can be urged in justification of the agreement? Why were the Western Powers in such a hurry to recognize a new Polish government before elections could be held? It is sometimes argued that, with the war against Hitler still unfinished, the Western Allies could not afford to quarrel with Stalin. But neither could he afford to quarrel with them. He could not simply withdraw from the war, because unless he got his army into Germany, he could not take the war

booty and reparations which were to be the spoils of victory. The Western Allies were in sufficient strength on the Rhine to go to Berlin without him if necessary. As far as Europe was concerned, the Big Three could hardly avoid finishing the war together, whatever their diplomatic differences. But Roosevelt may have felt that nothing must be done to annoy Stalin lest it cause him to refuse to join in the war against Japan. If that was the explanation, Poland must be added to the concessions made at Yalta at the expense of China specifically, as the price for Russian aid in the Pacific war.

THE section of the Yalta agreement relating to Manchuria has been the most widely criticized of all the Yalta decisions. Like the agreement on Poland, it was a deal between the Big Three to the detriment of a weaker Allied nation and without its consent. But it differed from the Polish "solution" in two important respects. In the first place, whereas Poland was already under Russian occupation, so that the only question was whether an accomplished fact could be altered, the concessions of Chinese sovereign rights to Russia referred to the future and were promised to Russia as a reward for prospective entry into the Pacific war. Second, while in all the negotiations on European questions both Roosevelt and Churchill took part, together with their respective Foreign Ministers, Roosevelt negotiated the agreement for Russia's entry into the Pacific war not only without consulting Churchill (who was only invited to sign it after it had been concluded), but also without the participation of his own Secretary of State.

The exclusion of Stettinius from this transaction is indeed the most extraordinary feature of the whole Yalta conference. The excuse was that the agreement for Russia's entry into the war was purely a military matter in which the State Department was not concerned; Stettinius himself in his memoirs, whether out of loyalty to Roosevelt or to cover up his own humiliation, accepts this version of the matter.

But a treaty involving extensive postwar

territorial changes and transfers of sovereign rights is obviously the proper concern of a country's diplomats, not merely of its soldiers.

Moreover, Hopkins and Harriman, who were not military men, were brought into the discussions, though Stettinius and his team of advisers from the State Department were kept out of them. Roosevelt's failure to call on them for information and advice about the extremely complex Far Eastern problems with which he had to deal is all the more strange because he had previously refrained from reading the memoranda which the State Department had prepared for his perusal on the journey to the conference. Byrnes relates in *Speaking Frankly*:

... not until the day before we landed at Malta did I learn that we had on board a very complete file of studies and recommendations prepared by the State Department. I asked the President if the Department had given him any material and he advised me it was all in the custody of Lieutenant William M. Rigdon. Later, when I saw some of these splendid studies, I greatly regretted they had not been considered on board ship. I am sure the failure to study them while en route was due to the President's illness. And I am sure that only President Roosevelt, with his intimate knowledge of the problems, could have handled the situation so well with so little preparation.

Roosevelt's own knowledge of the problems, however, appears not to have been as intimate as Byrnes would have us believe. The agreement on Manchuria stated that "the former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 shall be restored," and afterwards, in verbal justification of the pact, Roosevelt claimed that the Russians were not getting anything new from China but only recovering what the Japanese had taken from them. This indicates that he was unaware that the original leases to Russia of Port Arthur, Dairen, and the South Manchurian Railway had expired twenty years previously and had only been renewed in favor of Japan as a result of the Japanese "Twenty-one Demands" of 1915, while the Russian rights in the Chinese Eastern Railways, as revised by the Sino-Soviet treaty of 1924, had been voluntarily sold by Russia to

Japan over China's vehement protest in 1935.

These were historical facts not likely to be known to anyone who was not a specialist in Far Eastern affairs, and a President of the United States could not be expected to discover them by intuition, but if he had been willing to avail himself of the services of the State Department—which kept files and archives for recording such facts—he would have been correctly informed about the past history of the properties which he so lightly made over to Stalin at China's expense. He would have been informed also that these leased territories and railways, whether held by Russia or Japan, had prevented the proper exercise of Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria for half a century, and that at best he was perpetuating what had hitherto proved to be the most dangerous and intractable source of conflict in Far Eastern affairs.

THERE can be little doubt that Roosevelt avoided consulting Stettinius about this deal for the same reason that he avoided consulting Churchill or Chiang Kai-shek—because he anticipated that they would object. He did not want to read State Department memoranda because they might not fit in with his intentions. Stalin's terms for entering the Pacific war had already been communicated to Roosevelt before Yalta, and he seems to have made up his mind to grant them without giving his official advisers a chance to discuss them—especially in view of the known opinions of Under Secretary Grew, who had been for ten years Ambassador to Japan and had a great knowledge of Far Eastern problems.

It does not follow, however, that because Roosevelt did not consult the State Department, he did not consult anybody. He had his own executive assistants at the White House, and the one of them specially in charge of Far Eastern affairs was Lauchlin Currie. Currie was mentioned as a fellow-traveler closely connected with the American Communist underground in the list of names given by Whittaker Chambers to Assistant Secretary Adolph Berle in 1940, and was named as a former member of a Soviet spy

ring in the recently published FBI report on Communist espionage which was sent to President Truman at the end of 1945. The McCarran Committee also heard considerable testimony about the political activities which Currie is alleged to have carried on in relation to Far Eastern affairs without the knowledge or consent of the State Department. It may be inferred that, if Roosevelt ever asked his advice on what should be conceded to Russia in Manchuria, the advice given would probably not have been to the disadvantage of the Soviet Union.

The stock defense of the Yalta agreement on Manchuria is that the staffs had told Roosevelt that Russia must be brought into the war in order to minimize the American casualties which would be incurred in an invasion of the Japanese homeland. But it was for the President to review this military advice in the light of the basic objectives of American foreign policy. Who was sacrificing American lives and for what end? If Stalin had demanded Alaska as his price for entering the war, most Americans would undoubtedly have considered that it would be better to have a negotiated peace with Japan than buy Russian entry into the war at such a cost.

The surrender of China's sovereign rights was not so different a case, for the United States had in fact got involved in war with Japan precisely because of a policy of opposition to Japanese domination over China, and it was a contradiction of this policy to promote a new domination over China in order to destroy the old one. When Stalin had stated his terms, the question which should have been considered was whether it was possible to have a satisfactory peace with Japan without bringing in Russia at all. In February 1945 Japan was already in fact even more thoroughly defeated than Germany, for the Japanese empire depended entirely on sea communications, and Japanese sea-power had been irretrievably smashed by the battle of the Leyte Gulf in October 1944. According to the testimony of General Bonner Fellers, General MacArthur had already

before the Yalta conference communicated to Roosevelt unofficial Japanese peace overtures amounting to acceptance of unconditional surrender but for the reservation that the Japanese monarchy should be preserved (as in the end it was).

If Japan early in 1945 had been encouraged to get out of the war in the way Italy had been, the Japanese would have had to hand over Manchuria, together with other occupied territories in China, directly to the Chinese National Government; Russia would then have had no pretext for invading Manchuria (unless Moscow were to launch an open war of aggression against China), the Chinese Communists would not have been allowed to enter Manchuria and take over the arms stocks of the Japanese army, and it is unlikely that China would be today a Communist country.

THE main source of the tragedy of Yalta was an obsession in Roosevelt's mind with the idea of Big Three unity, combined with an increasing disregard of the rights of weaker nations. The Roosevelt of Yalta was no longer the man who had drafted the Atlantic Charter. During the last two years of his life he fell more and more under the spell of his vision of a world governed arbitrarily for its good by a conclave of three men. In this trend of his thinking there was probably a subtle intoxication of personal power, for the international stage enabled him to gratify that latent appetite for autocracy which he could never indulge in the domestic politics of America.

But it was necessarily Russia, and not the Western Powers, that gained by Big Three dictatorship, for it implied principles of an authoritarian, and not of a democratic, order. The democracies can never play the totalitarian game unless they themselves become totalitarian; their interest as democracies lies in a world of independent and freely associated nations large and small. American and British policies over the last few years indicate that this lesson has made an impression. But it cannot be learned too thoroughly.

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE BAKERY STORE LADY

Bulwark of Free Enterprise

SYDNEY H. KASPER

WHEN I saw Sam Stone in Chicago recently he asked me how my mother was, and when I told him she had died several months ago he stared at me for a moment and then said softly, "She was the sharpest business-woman I ever met."

Sam should know. I suppose that Ma gave him as hard a time as she did any salesman. In the days when our bakery was zooming along the heights of its greatest prosperity, it seemed as though every bakery commodity salesman in Chicago visited our store regularly. Most Jewish bakeries were risky enterprises; the proprietor was invariably a bread baker who had either ambition or an ambitious wife, who had scrimped together a few dollars so he could "go in for myself." He labored eighteen hours a day, baking and selling, and with no business knowledge other than baking, went broke after a few months or a year, and then returned to working for some other baker. As soon as he accumulated a little capital he

would begin casting around for another bakery and the cycle would recommence.

It seemed to me in those days that every Jewish baker in Chicago had employed and been employed by every other Jewish baker in the city. When we had the big bakery on 71st Street five of the six bakers had been my father's employes at one time or another. Of the sixth, a young Polish boy, Ma would say, "Your Pa learned him out."

Ma, who had been through the cycle several times, including one memorable bankruptcy in a small town ("in I'way State"), was in no mood to trifle with the opportunities presented by our lucky streak when we finally opened a real money-making bakery. Salesmen soon discovered that, although she had had only an elementary education in her native Poland, she had a most facile mind for gathering, winnowing, and retaining facts with amazing rapidity and selectivity.

When a spice salesman would quote her a price of three and a half cents for cinnamon, she would say, "But the wholesale market is only three cents." Naturally, he would reply that the half-cent difference was his company's profit, whereupon she would exclaim, "Profit—profit! You got a nerve to try to make a profit on me. That's the trouble with you big companies, you suck the blood of little business people like me. For who am I working—for your company? I'm just a poor woman trying to raise three little children"—referring to my brother, thirty, my sister, twenty-three, and me, seventeen—"and my poor husband slaves night and day"—Father was probably relaxing at that moment in our new La Salle V-8—"and for what? So your company can make big profits

EVERY Jewish business institution, someone has said, is merely the lengthened shadow of a woman—and why not, considering for how many generations Jews, at least those of East European origin, have lived under a matriarchal society. SYDNEY H. KASPER here illustrates this general truth with the particular example of his parents' bakery in Chicago. Mr. Kasper, at present chief of the publications branch of the Housing and Home Finance Agency in Washington, has worked as a publicity man for cultural and social-welfare organizations and has published articles in a variety of periodicals. He was born in Chicago in 1911 and attended the Universities of Wisconsin and Chicago.

from us. How much do you think we can get for a cinnamon coffee cake today? Do you think we charge gold for our cakes?"—Actually, of course, we were charging thirty cents for a cinnamon coffee cake when other bakers in the city were struggling to get twenty.—"Go back and tell your boss that we're not working for him, and if he wants to sell us cinnamon for three cents, all right, but if he wants to profiteer on poor working people we don't want to do business with him. Go!"—and this was always accompanied with a dramatic opening of the door.

Bewildered by this torrential flow of imprecations, threats, and irrelevancies, but always cognizant of our excellent credit rating, the salesman would invariably settle for three and a quarter.

SAM STONE received especially rough treatment. Sam was short, round, young, eager. Sam's mother had established a sturdy, steadily expanding egg noodle business, and Sam, desperate for distribution in a highly competitive market, knew that our bakery could be a high turnover outlet.

But Mother knew it, too. When Sam first approached her with his noodle proposition her reply was a blunt, cold, "No."

"Why not?" Sam asked, crackling the cellophane package in his fingers. "Stone's Noodle is the best on the market. You get a lot of traffic in here, and I'll bet you could sell fifty dozen a week without any trouble."

"No."

"Why not?"

"Why not?" Ma repeated. "Ask the boss," and she pointed to the shop, separated from the store by a partition, where my father could be found any time of the day between 4 A.M. and 2 P.M. "You want I should get into a fight with my husband? He doesn't want me to take in noodles. He says this is a bakery, not a delicatessen. He says in the hell with noodles, ice cream, and candy. We don't bother the delicatessens and we don't want they should fight with us."

"But look at all the money you'll make," pleaded Sam. "No fuss, no wrapping, no selling even; we'll put in a stand and the customers can help themselves. After all, what difference does it make how you make an honest profit?" This last he addressed to me; we had gone to high school together, but if Sam expected any sympathy from me

he was wrong. I shrugged my shoulders. In business matters Ma was never wrong; I usually was.

"Listen to him!" Ma turned to me, and then back to Sam. "A profit!" she sneered. "How much can we make on a bag of noodles? And for this I have to give you space and a salesgirl and rent and light and heat and maybe we make a penny a bag."

"A penny a bag!" Sam shouted. "We sell them to you for \$1.92 a dozen and you sell 'em for twenty cents a bag and you call that a penny a bag profit!"

Ma laughed, but with no mirth.

"All right, so it's four cents a bag. This you call a profit?"

Sam's red face grew purple.

"That's 25 per cent—how many businesses do you know that make 25 per cent on an item?"

"I don't know what per cent is," said Ma imperturbably. "Talk to my boy here about per cents, he went to college. All I know is four cents a bag is not enough. If I want to take a chance to make my husband mad and take in noodles I can handle Rogoff's—he'll give me eight cents a bag."

"Rogoff's!" Sam almost screamed. "Some noodle. How can you stand there and compare Rogoff's Noodle with Stone's Noodle? Rogoff's Noodle is junk, dirt, fooley!"

"Don't holler," said Ma. "By me a noodle is a noodle. Stone, Shmone, Rogoff, Shmogoff, they're all alike." She herself never served any but Stone's.

"All right, all right," said Sam, "how much do you want off—twenty-four cents a dozen?"

"Hal" Then, after waiting for the shaft to sink in, "Sixty cents."

Sam staggered, his eyes rolling.

"Sixty cents! I can't do it, I won't—sixty cents! That's what our cost is. How can you expect us to stay in business if we give everybody sixty cents off?"

"Don't give it to everybody," snapped Ma. "Give it to me because I'll sell lots of noodles—maybe one hundred dozen a week."

Sam finally gave in.

"All right, all right, sixty cents," he said, mopping his forehead, and taking out his order pad. "How many do you want?"

"Twenty dozen medium and twenty dozen fine"—Sam was busily writing—"and eight dozen free."

Plop went the order pad on the floor.

"Free? Free! What is this, a holdup?"

"Listen to me, young man," said Ma sternly, "don't call me a robber, a Capone. I'm an honest woman trying to make a living for her family, my three children, and I have to send my youngest boy to college and you call me a robber. Rogoff's always gives me one dozen free for every two dozen I order. I'm not asking you for any favors."

"But, how can you compare Rogoff's—" and then Sam shrugged his shoulders helplessly. "All right, four free dozen." But he didn't mark his order pad until Ma said, "Six." Six it was.

"Now," said Sam breezily, "You'll need a stand for the noodles. I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll let you have our special ten-dollar display stand for five dollars."

"Free," said Ma.

"Wait a minute!" pleaded Sam. "Do you realize we have to pay for these stands? We have them made especially for us. We don't turn them out like noodles, you know."

"Free. Or take your noodles back."

"Three-fifty?"

"Free."

So we "took in" noodles. After the noodle stand had been installed and Sam was gone I said, "You gave Sam quite a beating."

Ma smoothed a tiny wrinkle in her apron carefully and said, "In private you don't need a mouth. I don't want my neighbors should know what I am doing and I don't want to know what they are doing. But in business you got to have a mouth what to talk. If you don't the salesmen will give you sweet talk and rob you when you're not looking. I got a mouth—but the trouble with you and your brother and your sister and your father is—you ain't got a mouth what to talk."

IT WAS true; no one but Ma had a mouth what to talk. We cringed inwardly at her methods, but accepted the fruits.

I remember the time the bakery on 51st Street was going under. Ma and Pa had sold our house on the West Side and bought the store on the South Side. Pa was going to try for the fourth or fifth time to "be for himself."

Unfortunately the neighborhood they had selected was in transition, and within two years it changed from totally white

to almost totally Negro. My father couldn't bake the sweet-potato pies, soft white bread, and three-for-a-nickel sweet rolls the Negroes demanded, nor would the Negroes buy the caraway seed rye bread, egg twists, bagels, and streusel coffee cakes that had attracted our Jewish trade. A specialty business has to have a specialty clientele. One year after the transition was completed our fate was clear.

Pa and Ma discussed our gloomy prospects endlessly. Pa was all for selling out, with the sure knowledge that the purchase price would just about pay our debts, and going back to work for some other baker. Ma demurred.

"I don't want to go back to living in private," she said. "I want to be in business. Besides, what do you get working for someone else? You slave twelve, fourteen hours a day and the boss takes all the money."

"So here I work twelve, fourteen hours a day, too, and what do I get?" said Pa wearily. "At least when you work for someone else you work, you get your pay regular, and you go home with a quiet mind, and he has the headaches."

"Listen to me," pleaded Ma. "It's the worst thing—it's a sin a person should let himself get discouraged. You want to be like Mr. Wolf—you know, his wife she always comes in for a yesterday's rye bread it shouldn't be cracked on the side? He went broke, too, and instead of starting up again he began selling for someone else. So what is with him? He can't keep up the apartment building anymore. His wife cries plenty to me. Is that good?"

She paused for a moment while Pa shook his discouraged head. Then she began to speak eagerly but slowly, to be sure that her message registered.

"Look—every day the boy takes me for a ride on 71st Street, in South Shore. Every day I look at stores and I talk with people. Last week I saw a store that just fits us. It's just next door to Kusnitsky's butcher shop. Remember Kusnitsky, he used to have the best butcher shop on 51st Street, so when the neighborhood changed he moved out? So yesterday I had a long talk with Kusnitsky. He tells me there are plenty Jewish people in South Shore, and not a single Jewish bakery in the whole neighborhood!"

Pa lifted his head for a moment, then his eyes dulled again.

"What makes you think we could make a living there?"

"What makes me think—Kusnitsky says he was never so good off like he is now. There are lots of Jewish people, they pay the highest prices for kosher meat, and he has to have two helpers now. I'm telling you, Harry, we could make such a good living there, we could be independent—we could laugh from the world!"

Pa was still unconvinced.

"A new store costs money; you need ovens, flour, sugar, machinery, everything; we'll be lucky to pay our bills from selling this store—where will you get the money?"

"I'll get it somewhere," said Ma. "We got lots of friends, relatives. . . . I might as well tell you, I already signed the lease on the store. Now I have to get the money."

So Ma and I started our expedition to get the money to outfit and open the new store. Our first stop that rainy November night was the home of Joe Levy, my father's cousin, who was also in the bakery business.

"Rosie, what brings you out on a night like this?" was Joe's first question as he opened the door. His second was, "Where's Harry?"

"Joe," said Ma, "one thing you must promise me—promise me before God you won't tell Harry that I was here. He'll kill me if he finds out I came to see you about this business."

"What business?"

Ma described the evil days that had befallen our bakery, then described the new store she had rented.

"Now, Joe," she said, "I want you should loan me one thousand dollars."

"A thousand dollars!" exclaimed Joe. "Do you know how much money that is?"

"I don't care how much money it is, you got to loan it to me. Joe, we'll pay it back in a hurry—you'll see—I know we can do good business in South Shore."

"Rosie," Joe looked perturbed, "don't you know that tonight is Friday night—*shabbos*? How do you come to dare to talk about money on *shabbos*?"

"That just goes to show how bad off we are." *Shabbos* meant as little to Ma as she

knew it meant to Joe. "Do you think I would dare to ask for money on *shabbos* if I was good off or if I wanted it for a fur coat? No, I'm asking you because we need it so bad. Joe, think—it's for your own cousin, you were boys together in the old country, he trained you in to be a baker, his mother is your mother's sister. You've got to do it."

"I can't—no—business has been very bad lately. All my money is tied up in buildings, I can't lay my hands on cash."

"Then borrow it."

"Borrow it!" Now Joe was honestly aghast. "Do you mean to sit there and tell me to borrow money for you—and no collateral? Even if I wanted to borrow it, where would I get it?"

"That's your business. I need it and you're the last one I came to. Joe, no one else will loan us the money—the banks, the suppliers, the lenders—no one will loan us. We're broke and Harry has no place to go, just to go back slaving for someone else. Joe, in God's name, I beg you, give us the money."

"For the last time, Rosie, no."

"All right then," Ma shoved her hands firmly into her muff, "then I'll just sit here until you give me the money." Joe turned to the window and began to study the wet streets. Suddenly her resolve melted and she began to cry softly.

"Go ahead, go ahead, throw me out—I'll tell everybody how Joe Levy wouldn't lend his own cousin, his flesh and blood, a stinking one thousand dollars and his wife comes in all this rain and mud and gets down on her knees and begs like a beggar and all the time her husband don't know where she is from nothing, he'll kill her if he finds out, and on *shabbos* yet, in the synagogue they tell you *shabbos* is the holiest day—"

"All right, enough! Don't cry so much for me," said Joe irritably, "so I'll loan you five hundred dollars."

"Nine."

"Six."

"What good is six hundred, what are we buying, poppy seed only? Seven-fifty."

"All right."

"You got to know how to cry," said Ma as we got into the car. "That's a hundred and fifty more than I expected to get from Joe. Now let's see who we will beg from next. Maybe Bornstein the miser, he'll charge me a good 20 per cent, but if we do

business we can pay him back first. Maybe Gollo, I'll tell him we'll buy his flour only, nobody else's."

By the end of the following week, Ma had collected her little pile, and we proceeded to liquidate the 51st Street store and open the 71st Street store. When Pa asked Ma where the money was coming from she would only reply, "We got—we got—don't ask." Bowed down with his many troubles, plus the problem of beginning his baking operations in the new store (we started with three bags of flour borrowed from another cousin in Gary), Pa asked no further.

BUSINESS was good. So good, in fact, that within six months all of our debts had been discharged and Ma could laugh from the world. But she never did. Instead, the very success of the business stimulated her to greater and greater efforts. Now that she had a bakery she could be proud of, she hounded the salesgirls constantly: "Wash the showcases—clean the crumbs from the counter—wear a hairnet—don't keep your hands in your pockets—the bagels you shouldn't mix with the poppy seed rolls—take off the dirty apron." She bore down on the male help, too: "Scrub the floors—put ammonia in the water, the windows should shine—wax the linoleum—wash your hands—why is the bread so soft like a sponge?"

Salesmen were met, joined in conflict, and vanquished determinedly, for as business expanded our credit rating increased in proportion and Ma's terms stiffened accordingly. I often thought that Ma went far beyond necessity's call.

One rainy afternoon, when trade was slow, and Ma and I took stock of our goods—"Look at all the lovely *challehs* and rolls and rye bread, we'll be stuck with plenty"—I said, "Ma, why do you have to fight so much with everybody? It's like a habit—you haggle with Shapiro when you buy my socks and shirts from him, you fight with Di Santos over the cleaning bills, you argue with Klein over fruit for the store. They have to make a living, too, you know."

Ma rearranged the rye bread on the racks. She patted the last one into place, squeezed it a little to hear the crust crackle, and said, "Son, you'll never be a businessman. You're too soft. Why do you think I work so hard

in this business? Why do you think Pa and I get up five o'clock in the morning and stay in the store until eleven at night? Don't you think we like to go out sometimes, too?"

"But do we ask for good times, for vacations, for card games? No. We work hard because we want our children should come to something. We want you should have a nice home so you won't be ashamed from us to bring your friends home with you. That takes money. And money you don't get by sleeping late in bed and being soft to people. When we had the bakery in I'way State and Pa ran everything he was soft to everybody and everybody stole from us. Pa worked and worked and worked and got so sick he had to go to the Mayo Brothers. Pa isn't lazy, but his work was no good and you know why? Because it didn't have no taste. It went for nothing and we went broke. Our worst enemies should have such troubles like we had in I'way State.

"At least here our work comes to something. Pa always was the best baker on rolls and bread in Chicago, but we never had a chance before. Look how we worked up ourselves. Now we have a good business and a good name. You can walk up and down 71st Street and everybody knows us and will give us credit. From this one little business—it's like a cow and we all suck from one bag.

"And who made this business—Pa? Ay, ay, ay, a baker you can't beat him, but without me he would still be just a baker getting played out working for someone else. He would come to nothing, I'm telling you. Who got the money to start the store? Who rented the store when everybody got discouraged and wanted to quit? Who knows how I didn't sleep at night when I prayed to God we should be able to start up the new store? Who went to cousin Joe for money and who cried for Mr. Bornstein he should lend us money at 20 per cent? Who got Plotkin he should build the ovens and wait six months for his money? Nobody—only me."

"All right!" I cried. "But that's over now. Do you still have to argue with everybody, just to save a penny here and a penny there?"

Ma bent her head close to mine.

"I'll tell you a secret," she said. "Every good business has to have a *mamzer* in it—in this business, it's me."

CEDARS OF LEBANON

WHY SUFFERINGS COME UPON MAN

Some Passages from the Talmud

WHY God allows the guiltless to suffer, and why suffering seems to have a special affinity for the saintly—these are the most baffling of all religious questions. Nor are they necessarily resolved by faith. Indeed, the more faith one has in a good and all-powerful God, the more puzzling God's apparent need to permit such suffering. The Book of Job is the most ambitious attempt to deal with this problem, but it is also the subject of many discussions in the Talmud, and one of these is translated here.

The Rabbis introduce their discussion with a quotation from the Bible which points up the issue: *If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His eyes, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I have put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord That healeth thee.* The implication of this promise is that if we do suffer physical distress, then we must somehow have been remiss in fulfilling the word of God. Nevertheless, after urging man to try to understand his troubles by "searching his own deeds," the Rabbis are forced to assert that there is a kind of suffering which, since it is clearly undeserved, must be considered a mark of God's favor; and these sufferings are called the "chastisements of love."

Johanan bar Nappaha, who lived from 199 to 279 C.E., is the central personality in this

discussion of what exactly the "chastisements of love" are. He is reputed to have been a very handsome man—the Talmud waxes lyrical in describing him: "If you take a newly wrought silver goblet, fill it with red garnets and crown it with a wreath of roses, then place it between light and shadow, the peculiar reflection of the light will give you an idea of Rabbi Johanan's dazzling beauty." But he was also a very unfortunate man, and well qualified to discuss the problem of suffering. He had lost both his parents when he was very young. He himself had eleven children, ten boys and a girl, and all the boys died, leaving him, Graetz writes, "almost childless." It was his custom to carry a small bone, possibly the tooth of his last son, and he would show it to others to comfort them in their distress.

THE passages in the text enclosed by parenthetical marks are explanations interpolated by the great 11th-century commentator Rashi; they afford the reader an insight into some typical Talmudic dialectic. The quotations from Biblical and Rabbinic authorities, the fine technical distinctions and refutations, are suddenly interrupted by a moving glimpse of human beings struggling to harmonize the realities of their life with their religious faith—and not always succeeding. The remarks enclosed by brackets are my own.

—HERBERT WEINER

IF A MAN sees that sufferings are coming upon him, let him examine his deeds, for it is written: *Let us search out and try our ways, and return unto the Lord.* If he has searched and found no explanation, let him assume the explanation to be his neglect of the study of Torah, for it is written: *Happy is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of Thy*

law. (That is, he is led to the study of Torah through sufferings—RASHI.) If he has weighed this possibility, yet found it unconvincing, then he may be sure that his sufferings are the chastenings of love, for it is written: *Whom the Lord loveth, He correcteth.* (That is, the Holy One causes him to suffer in this world even though he is sinless, in order to increase beyond his deserts

his reward in the world to come—RASHI.)

There was a difference of opinion between R. Jacob ben Idi and R. Aha ben Hanina as to the definition of chastenings of love. The former says: "Chastenings of love are those which do not necessitate interrupting the study of Torah, for it is written: *Happy is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of Thy law.*" The latter says: "Chastenings of love are those which do not interfere with prayer, for it is said: *Blessed be God, Who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me.*" Said to them R. Abba the son of R. Hiyya ben Abba, "Thus said R. Hiyya ben Abba in the name of R. Johanan: Both [neither interrupting study nor interfering with prayer] are required for our suffering to be recognized as 'chastenings of love,' for it is said: *Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth.*"

Why then does it say: *And teachest him out of Thy law?* Do not read *telammedennu* [Thou teachest him] but *telammedeinu* [Thou teachest us]. Thou teachest us this matter (namely, that a man whom the Lord chastens is blessed—RASHI) out of Thy law as a conclusion *a fortiori* from the law concerning "tooth" and "eye." Tooth and eye are only parts of a man, yet [if a master injures the tooth or eye of his slave] the slave obtains his freedom. How much more would this reasoning apply to sufferings that torment the entire body of a man! And this agrees with a saying of R. Simeon ben Lakish. R. Simeon ben Lakish said: "The word 'covenant' is mentioned in the Bible in connection with salt, and the word 'covenant' is also mentioned in connection with sufferings. The word 'covenant' is mentioned in connection with salt in the verse: *Neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking.* And the word 'covenant' is mentioned in connection with sufferings in the verse: *These are the words of the covenant.* [These words begin the chapter in Deuteronomy dealing with the sufferings of Israel.] Now even as in the 'covenant' mentioned in connection with salt, the salt cleanses and makes tasty the meat, so also in the 'covenant' mentioned in connection with sufferings, suffering cleanses all the sins of a man."

It has been taught: R. Simeon ben Yohai says: "Three good gifts did the Holy One, blessed be He, give Israel, but each of them

was given only through sufferings. They are: the Torah, the Land of Israel, and the World to Come. Whence do we know this of the Torah? Because it is said: *Happy is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of Thy law.*

"Whence do we know this of the Land of Israel? Because it is written: *As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee,* and close after that it is written: *For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land.*

"Whence do we know this of the World to Come? Because it is written: *For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching a light, and reproofs of sufferings are the way of life* (referring to life in the world to come—RASHI)."

ATANNA once recited the following teaching before R. Johanan: "He who occupies himself with study of Torah, and with acts of charity, yet buries his children—all his sins are forgiven him [probably an allusion to R. Johanan himself]."

R. Johanan replied to him: "This fact [that his sins are forgiven] is understandable when related to study of Torah and acts of charity, for it is written: *Through mercy and truth is sin expiated.* Mercy refers to 'acts of charity,' for it is written: *He who pursues justice and mercy will find life, justice, and honor.* And truth refers to 'study of Torah,' as it is written: *Buy truth and do not sell it.* But what grounds do we have for inferring that one who buries his children [for that reason has his sins forgiven]?"

A certain elder answered him by reciting the following statement attributed to R. Simeon ben Yohai: "We can deduce this [that our sins are expiated by the death of our children] from an analogous use of the word iniquity in the Bible. In one place it is written: *By mercy and truth is iniquity expiated.* And in another place it is written: *And recompenses the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children.* . . .

R. HIYYA BEN ABBA fell ill and R. Johanan went to visit him. Asked R. Johanan: "Are your sufferings welcome to you?"

He replied: "Neither they nor their reward." Said R. Johanan: "Give me your hand." He gave him his hand, and R. Johanan lifted him.

ONCE R. Johanan fell ill and R. Hanina went to visit him.

"Are your sufferings welcome to you?" he asked.

Replied R. Johanan: "Not they and not their reward."

Said R. Hanina to him, "Then, give me your hand." He gave him his hand, and R. Hanina lifted him.

But why did not R. Johanan raise himself [inasmuch as R. Johanan had power to help others]?

The sages replied, "The prisoner does not free himself from prison."

ONCE R. Eleazar fell ill and R. Johanan went to visit him. Seeing that he was lying in a dark room, he bared his arm and light radiated from it (his flesh was radiant, for he was very beautiful—RASHI). Then he noticed that R. Eleazar was weeping, and

said to him: "Why do you weep? Is it because of Torah (that you feel you did not study as much as you wished—RASHI)? But we have learned: 'Whether much or little, it is all the same, provided that the heart is directed to heaven.'

"Or is it perhaps lack of sustenance (because you are not rich—RASHI)? But not everybody has the privilege of enjoying two repasts [the richness of both material and spiritual wealth].

"Or is it perhaps because you have no children? Then, look, this is the bone of my tenth son!" [All of R. Johanan's sons had died.]

Replied R. Eleazar to him: "I am weeping on account of this, your beauty, which is going to rot in the earth."

"For this," replied R. Johanan, "you have indeed cause to weep—"

And they both wept.

SHE'S CRAZY AND IT MEANS SOMETHING

ELI SIEGEL

CRAZY in St. Louis,
Pauline Snodgrass,
Who was good in the kitchen once,
Good on the doorstep,
Good on cleaning pavements Saturday mornings,
Crazy, she does this no more.
Instead says things that won't get her things
at the grocer's.
She talks so streetcar conductors would wonder
and think all wasn't well in Pauline inside.
She wasn't crazy all the time, when she
cleaned doorsteps well and kept the kitchen
sink clean, when you consider kitchen
sinks.
Right now she talks funny, and cleans doorsteps
no longer, and quarrels with the grocer no more.
She doesn't look at steaks any more to pick
the one she wants.
She's got no interest any more in getting
sugar cheap.

She hands no more meekly her fare to the
man taking money on the trolley cars in
St. Louis.
She talks funny, and eats steaks not caring
how much they cost.
She doesn't worry about gas-meters.
Paul, her son, has no whooping cough to
bother her, and doesn't make so much
noise any more she almost screams.
You can't tell her apart much from the hundred
or so crazy people in the house who eat
breakfast with her every morning.
Doorsteps don't mean so much to her now.
Brooms aren't on her mind much now.
Once she wasn't crazy.
Well, now, Pauline Snodgrass, housewife of
St. Louis, is.
She is.
It means something to her.
It means something.
She's crazy and it means something.
It means something; Pauline Snodgrass,
housewife of St. Louis, is crazy.

THIS is ELI SIEGEL's second poem in COMMENTARY. He is famous as the author of "Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana," which won the *Nation* prize almost thirty years ago.

ON THE HORIZON

BELITTling SHOLOM ALEICHEM'S JEWS

Folk Falsification of the Ghetto

MIDGE DECTER

ALL through the performance of *The World of Sholom Aleichem*, I had the most disturbing sensation of being reminded of something. It was as if the production was presenting and at the same time evoking the not-presented. There was the work of Sholom Aleichem, writer of Yiddish and Hebrew books, born in Russia in 1859, died in New York in 1916, bounded at either end by life and death and in the middle by the horizons of his own special genius for perceiving and communicating. And there was his "world," now, bounded on all sides by the arrangement of stage and

FOR MANY months now, New Yorkers in large numbers have been flocking to the Barbizon Theater to see *The World of Sholom Aleichem*, a production offering selections from the works of Sholom Aleichem, Peretz, and other great Yiddish writers. As often as not the New York theatre-goer will buy four, five, or six tickets, inviting his parents to come along and bringing the children as well: *The World of Sholom Aleichem* has found an audience suddenly eager to discover a bond of community in reminiscences of the bygone Jewish world of 19th-century Eastern Europe. But the ghetto world presented to them on the stage has suffered a sea change into something not so rich and quite strange, MIDGE DECTER asserts here—a fact not altogether surprising, considering the familiar politico-cultural tendencies of those responsible for the production. Mrs. Decter, a former member of the staff of COMMENTARY, contributed the article "The Fruits of Modern Jewish Education" to our issue of October 1951. A native of St. Paul, Minnesota, Mrs. Decter attended the University of Minnesota and the College of Jewish Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

audience in the Barbizon Theater. It was only this "world," though presumably taking its existence from the literature, that ever came into sharp focus. Sholom Aleichem had somehow to retire into a hazy background, where he couldn't quite be seen but couldn't quite disappear either.

The production should properly have been called *The Little World of Sholom Aleichem*. It is the result of a great effort to press down a mass of existence and extract one small drop of pure essence. To that end, adapter, director, and costumer have combined to quell every possible deviation from a single tone and range of gesture. Arnold Perl, who adapted the material for the stage, has pointedly selected three discrete and unrelated scraps of literature, a story of Sholom Aleichem, one of I. L. Peretz, and a tale of Chelm. If Sholom Aleichem and Peretz, two unique writers who saw differently and felt differently and wrote differently, can be put together on one stage within one production—and if to them can be added one of the stories of Chelm, the legendary Mecca of innocents and idiots—there must be something outside them all that gives them a unified meaning. That something is the ghetto. Now there is possibly nothing wrong with this. But if you combine one man's vision with that of another, what you see should get *larger*, not smaller. And Mr. Perl's ghetto is a precious little essence, distilled and bonded. It is just the kind of Never-Never-Land American Jews like to think they came from, quaint, not quite respectable, but abounding with a special sweetness—the land of the little *shlepper* who couldn't make a living but knew how to follow the tortuous

intellectual gymnastics on a page of the Talmud and knew also how to turn his bitter fate to Eternal advantage. It is, in short, the land of *Dos Folk, Amcho*.

The East European Pale might have looked something like this, caught static in the repose of a sunny Sabbath afternoon. But it never was static; it was always going somewhere, about to do something, about, in fact, to fall apart.

Sholom Aleichem and Peretz caught it in motion, each in his way, and both had a real sensitivity to the tempos of decline and dissolution. It was the touchstone of their work. But on the stage, the rhythm of the Pale gave no sense of real motion, of development. It was a steady, even repetition, from opening moment to closing, of one figure in variation. The whole production was a sort of spoken folk dance.

THE show opens with an introduction to Ghetto Man—who calls himself, I suppose for reasons of literary *lèse majesté*, Mendelev Mocher Seforim (but is not under any circumstances to be taken for the “grandfather” of Yiddish literature, he of the iron prejudice and Rabelaisian pen). This Mendelev the Bookseller is the evening’s master of ceremonies. He limps in with his pushcart, all saggy-shouldered, shrewd-eyed, resigned, a home-remedy intellectual, a total failure. He sets the tone and the precise manner in which the audience is to be carried back to Eastern Europe. There is a brief but crucial interplay here between audience and stage. This audience has for the most part assembled out of a new-found piety for its “cultural heritage.” The pieties of American Jewry are, however, peculiarly touchy and selective. These Jews have brought their children; they have come for the uplift promised them by Jewish apologetics. They are at once in a high state of anticipation and yet wary lest their journey to the past bring up some past unpleasantness. Now our Mendelev, failure though he is, is a clever fellow. He knows they are not to be disturbed and sets them immediately at rest. The nature of the world about to unfold is in his first gesture. “Nu,” he says, “I wasn’t staring. I was just looking.” (Happy laughter.) And picks up a book. (Serious nods of appreciation.) “You have perhaps”—over the top of his spec-

tacles—“heard of our little town of Chelm. . . .” (Relaxed interest.)

The little town of Chelm is the subject of countless stories, jokes really, in which all the malicious self-mockery of East European Jewry is given full play. One could not find better confirmation of Freud’s theory about the schizophrenic nature of Jewish humor. The people of Chelm are fools, and each of their foolishnesses is merely a logical extension of the sophistry of *shtetl* society. The story presented here involves the purchase of a goat, and there are endless complications, brought on by a couple of pranksters, about determining the sex of the animal. Finally the rabbi of Chelm, torn between a paper of rabbinic certification indicating one sex and visible evidence indicating its opposite, decrees both ways. A highly mannered performance, something on the order of a Hasidic dance, coupled with the sweet and soothing commentary of Mendelev, manages to take out every last bit of sting. What is left is surely the Chelm story and yet bears no resemblance to it. “Aren’t we all idiots,” it insinuates, “and isn’t it somehow nobler to be a poor little idiot in this intense and sober world?” The director himself seemed to realize that by making each character a bouncing figure of fun he had robbed the whole thing of its real funniness, and the scene closes with a frantic tapping of forefingers on temples and murmured “Ooo’s,” as if to cover for some possible embarrassment. This is not distortion but a kind of subtle conversion. Chelm, Fool’s Town, has been reconverted to a suburb of the ghetto of the common man.

THE truth is that ghetto Jewry was not pleased with itself at all. If it could be humorous, that was because it was sitting on a keg of spiritual dynamite and had no other way to protect itself against the big explosion. American Jews can afford to be pleased by the ghetto. Time and distance and indifference have settled most of its conflicts for us. And even we can only enjoy the ghetto by retroactively making of it something it was not quite: a new Jewish folk tradition. We must remember that Sholom Aleichem was made laureate of the ghetto by his readers because he touched something very deep in *their* image of themselves, a disturbed image. He has no meaning for us

unless we take him on his own terms. Comedy that has no butt ceases to be funny and pales sweetly.

Similarly with irony that has no ambiguity. Perhaps the biggest conversion of all was worked on Peretz's "Bontsche Schweig." The story was there in full—it's not much of a story, really. But if Bontsche is only a pathetic little man, hounded and beaten all his life, asking, when offered any wish Heaven can provide, for a hot roll with butter—if he is not also the Jew who has no life in this world and cannot accept Paradise—then he has lost his ghetto-meaning. He becomes precisely what he became in this performance, an emasculated symbol of the little people. Here we have the danger of making art "folk"—a favorite pastime these days. For people to rediscover the folk implies somehow (at least for the main agents of this activity) a return to the simple and pure. For Jews to return to the "simple and pure" means to return to the ghetto—in the ghetto, people were little, close to their origins, close to their God, and so on. "Little," pinned down, always means "poor." And poor the ghetto Jews were, God knows, enough and plenty. But what if they weren't pure and simple? What if they were about the most God-forsaken, mixed-up, complicated people that ever lived? Maybe they were pretty intimate with their God, but what if they were at the same time downright impious? Well, then, the whole folk structure caves in; we shall *make* them pure and simple. In "rediscovering" the past we caricature it. Bontsche shuffles downstage to his seat at the Heavenly judgment in a style that is no longer even beatenness but mere gaucherie. He is dressed in rags that go beyond poverty into straight costume. He is a perfect empty outline for the evening's portrait of a noble and oppressed mass.

The ghetto has always lent itself to ideological use. It is the clinching argument for Zionism, Hebraism, Yiddishism, Bundism, assimilationism, survivalism, the *sine qua non* for every Jewish tendency. And the special ghetto of *The World of Sholom Aleichem* has its special message for the forward-looking. Bontsche Schweig's defending angel chronicles his life with ringing tones of denunciation for the oppressor. Be still no more, little men! You have friends in Heaven!

IT DOES no good, even in the rosy afterthought of five decades, to gainsay the facts: nobody in the ghetto liked it. Eventually vast numbers of people left it, and those who remained threw off its spiritual discipline. The literature seen today as the greatest flower of its creativity, the very literature with which *The World of Sholom Aleichem* seeks to reintroduce us to the charms of our past, grew out of a movement to "do something" about the impossible ghetto and its impossible Jews—the Enlightenment. The ghetto was not, as we like so much to think today, the center of a clean and simple life made unbearable by the pressures of a big and hostile world. Those who left, for America or Palestine or cosmopolitan Europe, escaped not so much from the Polish police dogs as from the heavy hands of their own fathers. It is not possible here to state in detail what the ghetto *was*, beyond saying merely that it was a human society, more particularly, a Jewish human society, and therefore by definition a very complex business. If a society is always far more terrible than its folklorists would choose to find it, it is also far more wonderful and beautiful. Had you told a ghetto Jew he was noble and oppressed—or, as in this case, noble *because* oppressed—he'd have laughed at you. What chances for puny "noble and oppressed" pitted against his formidable *tsores*? Had you in addition called him "little man," he would have become radiant in his anger. Not because he was especially proud—he was too wily a creature for social pride—but because he was, perhaps more than any other man on earth, poignantly aware of himself as an individual, irreducible human being.

Sholom Aleichem and Peretz and, to a lesser extent, Mendele, passed far beyond the tendentiousness of their contemporaries, the Enlighteners, because they were artists and therefore poor didacticians. They were simply unable to thin out the complexity of the life they saw around them, or put away either half of the ambivalence they felt toward it. How much more disturbing, then, to see just these three being used for this kind of hatchet job—cutting the ghetto down to easy sentiment—and a "progressive" moral.

THE Sholom Aleichem story, "The High School" ("Gymnasiye"), is made to cry-

tallize around a problem near and dear to the hearts of all good liberals, the *numerus clausus* for Jews. That Sholom Aleichem never wrote such a story one cannot say. He did. But that his story was not *about* discrimination in the school system of 19th-century Russia will be immediately clear to all who know him. It is the story of a man with a wife and of a wife with a son. The problem of getting the boy into a *gymnasiye* is a mere circumstance. ("I ask you," says the hero Aaron Katz in the last line of the story, "whoever dreamed up a—wife?") Katz is nagged and pushed and prodded by his wife, in the end sacrifices all, to do something he opposes: get the boy into a secular school. He is left alone while his wife and son travel from town to town seeking a school with an opening, he sells his business, and when the boy is finally admitted somewhere, he moves to the strange new town, penniless and exhausted. Then with a wonderful Sholom Aleichem twist the new scholar goes out on a students' political strike. This woeful tale is transmuted—by a fairly simple process of selecting, de-emphasizing essentials, and at the end, where there was nothing else to do, rewriting—into a rousing drama of man faced with an evil society. Katz is really proud and delighted about the school: he just adopts a manner of good-natured carping in response to his wife's good-natured hounding. Once involved, he becomes concerned with beating the system. And so on. In the last scene, when his son returns home to announce the strike, he shouts a long speech (this is completely of Perlian manufacture) ending with arms outstretched and the cry, "Strike!"

Somehow that "Strike!" is a necessary and inevitable finale. One waits through most of the evening for it to happen. It was in the first place no mere fortuity that Howard da Silva, the producer, and his company—most of whose political careers have left them in an acute state of professional embarrass-

ment—undertook to present a night of modern Jewish folklore. The enterprise of folk production has been for some time a private monopoly in the hands of the "progressives." And they have never yet managed either to subdue or to disguise the reprehensible politics that spark it—even in their most innocent products.

There is, despite the openly political character of this final piece, an absolute unity of form throughout the production. Little Jews, innocent and unsullied, the people of Chelm, Bontsche Schweig, Aaron Katz, court buffoons for the universe, terribly, amusingly pathetic, but strong with the strength of the weak and the many. (Some of the clichés escape me right now.) How can one better be both entertaining and instructive about the noble future of the Common Man than by taking off from such people?

THE response to *The World of Sholom Aleichem* has been one of universal delight. Here is the Jewish past as we like to think it. Here is Jewish culture as well-meaning friends like to understand it. Sweet and simple. Some enterprising young man of letters ought to start a ghetto revival—not just a spatter of tributes in memoriam, but a real honest-to-God revival replete with a rediscovery of values and the unearthing of hidden beauties. The ghetto is sufficiently dead in us by now to become a serene source of ageless wisdoms. This show has proved it. The revival would snowball.

And what of the real Sholom Aleichem? As Maurice Samuel, in his splendid book *The World of Sholom Aleichem*, describes Tevyeh, Sholom Aleichem's most famous character:

"[He] will not let you strike an attitude in his behalf; he is not docile material for your fits of cosmic righteousness."

Ah, the *real* Sholom Aleichem may have to wait until some golden time when plays can be produced without an audience.

THE STUDY OF MAN

GETTING AT THE FACTS BEHIND THE SOVIET FACADE

An Expert Explains His "Content Analysis" Method

FRANZ BORKENAU

AMONG the most urgent problems faced by the free world today is to find out what is really going on inside the USSR, and particularly the Kremlin. Such information is as essential to survival as it is to

IN JANUARY 1953 FRANZ BORKENAU, noted contemporary historian, astounded his readers on the Continent by asserting, in a West German weekly, that Stalin's life was in immediate danger. Seven weeks later Stalin's death was announced. COMMENTARY in May 1953 published an article by Dr. Borkenau giving his reasons for thinking Malenkov the prime mover of the anti-Semitic campaign that had raged behind the Iron Curtain in the months before Stalin's death. Today, almost a year later, such observers as Harry Schwartz of the New York Times are reporting, on the basis of present events in the USSR, confirmation of this diagnosis. How was Dr. Borkenau able to find out such things? In the present article he describes the method he has devised over the years for penetrating Soviet secrecy—a method that relies on no "inside" information. He here demonstrates how, in his view, it can be dependably used by anyone willing to apply himself with the necessary industry and conscientiousness; and most readers will, we daresay, be impressed by its right, as documented here, to be included in the arsenal of social science research techniques. Dr. Borkenau, a steady contributor to these pages, is the author of several authoritative books on Communism, the latest of which is *European Communism* (Harper). Born in Vienna, he was himself a member of the German Communist party until 1929. Subsequently he had a chance to witness the Spanish Civil War at first hand, and published what is still one of the best books on that tragic conflict, *The Spanish Cockpit*.

history, and in the near future may possibly make all the difference between peace and a third world war.

Yet never was information harder to come by, for never has so large an area of the inhabited earth been so tightly sealed off from the rest of humanity—not even the China of the Manchus, or the Japan of the Shoguns: at least, these countries did not lie so consistently and systematically about what went on inside them, but tried only to keep the outside world outside. The Soviet world is not content to keep the outsider away: it must also do everything to mask itself from him.

Soviet Russia, having been founded by force in the name of a utopian ideal, and being maintained by force in a way that goes directly counter to that ideal, must persuade the world that its inner reality is the opposite of what it actually is. Thus the largest part of Soviet publicistic and intellectual life, with its cultural institutions and communications machineries, is devoted to falsification on a scale without precedent in history.

However, this does not mean that our quest for the truth about the USSR is condemned to go completely unsatisfied. Nor does it excuse us from continuing to try, by every reasonable means, to get at that truth. The need is too emergent; it involves momentous political, economic, even social decisions to be taken by the leaders of the free nations that cannot be postponed, yet which cannot be arrived at on the basis of guesses. Now the fact is, a method has been found by which the inner workings of the Soviet regime can be penetrated to some extent. Despite its limitations—which are serious—this method has stood up amazingly well under testing.

THE method—which can be called a species of “content analysis”—takes its departure from what is known about the structural peculiarities of the Soviet regime and Soviet society.

The investigator must, first of all, not be taken in by the supposedly monolithic character of Soviet totalitarianism, by the unanimity with which its policies are expressed at the given moment. That dissension and factional struggle go on behind this smooth façade, especially on the top levels of authority, is shown by the recurrent purges and trials, and by the almost periodical execution, or disappearance from public view, of high leaders. Contrary to what so many sincere anti-Communists offer as explanation, these purges and these trials are not staged simply for mass consumption. The victims do not let themselves be persuaded to sacrifice their lives or liberty solely to advance the Communist cause; nor are they acting chiefly as scapegoats on whom the responsibility for the suffering of the common man in the USSR can be discharged. No, the purges, the trials, etc., etc., reflect, first and last, the presence of fierce political antagonisms among the Soviet rulers. The whole course of Soviet history, before, during, and since Stalin’s supremacy, betrays the presence of internal strife. When he realizes this, the researcher has found his entering wedge.

Domestic political struggle is one of the primary forms that the historical process has taken throughout recorded history, and Soviet society is no exception, however much its leaders would like to make it one. Their own high mortality rate would show, if anything, that internal and personal conflicts play a greater part in deciding things inside the Soviet empire than they ordinarily do elsewhere. And because they do so, they furnish perhaps the most important of all clues, as far as the outside world is concerned, to what is going on behind the scenes in the Soviet world.

What the investigator has to do is ascertain the nature of these conflicts and the issues at stake in them; the mere fact that there are internecine struggles tells him little. He must be able to interpret them and draw conclusions about their effects on Soviet policy in general. If he is to keep abreast of Soviet reality, he must also detect these conflicts before they have been fought to a conclusion, which is when the public is, as a rule, first allowed to hear about them.

It is, then, by reading correctly the signs of discord that the investigator can throw light on

the realities of Soviet power and chart its direction. But it may be asked: to what extent is such discord merely personal, a question solely of ambition and personalities; and to what extent does it involve real political differences?

Here, as in most other things, life in the USSR is different only in degree, not in kind, from life everywhere else, and it is just as hard to draw a line between the personal and the political factor. Both have to be taken into account, and especially their interaction. Yet certain peculiarities do attach to the Soviet case. Prominent among them is the institution or practice called “*chefstvo*,” which gets its name from the French word *chef*, meaning “leader” or “boss.” This system is not confined to the Soviet world, but the absence of political, economic, and intellectual freedom in that world endows it with much greater importance there, making it in effect the only way in which a Soviet citizen can rise to power or eminence. No matter what his pursuit or field, if he is ambitious he must choose a protector or patron among those already in power, and put himself in the relation of “client” to him and rely upon him for favors indispensable to advancement.

The universality of this practice creates a rather complicated and extensive system of patronage on the various echelons of Soviet power that has to be deciphered before the personal factor in Soviet politics can be given, in each case, its due importance. Difficult though this may seem, it is not always an insuperable task. The very scale on which the *chefstvo* system functions in Soviet Russia provides the observer with leads aplenty.

ONE can—up to a point—identify patronage relations in the USSR by scanning the list of those who head the big official power machines such as the party, police, army, labor unions, industrial sectors, civil service departments, etc. These heads, we can assume, are the principal wielders of patronage, and their first- and second-line staffs can be taken to be ostensibly members of their personal clientele. This equation would, however, make the problem of identifying patronage relations inside Soviet Russia only too simple, and shift the main difficulty to the identification of the relations between the top bosses alone.

The equation, useful as it may be, is too simple. And in one case, that of the Soviet army, it would appear to be downright false. Marshal Bulganin may be the army’s osten-

sible master, but its actual control seems to be split among a number of different, and competing, patronage groups—among so many, in fact, that some of them may still be unknown to us. The party's distrust of the army seems to account for this situation: thus the army is infiltrated by various extraneous political elements whose mission it is to keep the party's finger on the pulse of military power. Yet the party is not the only outside machine that has its finger there: the state police (MVD), the Foreign Office, the war industries, and perhaps still other *apparats* would seem each to have their own agents inside the military hierarchy. And what applies to the patronage system in the army also applies to the other power machines, official and personal, in the Soviet regime, though not to the same great extent.

Franz Neumann, in his monumental book on the Nazi state, *Behemoth*, showed that a totalitarian regime actually tended to be less monolithic than a democratic one because no external force like public opinion was allowed to intervene in the incessant struggle going on between the various government departments and *apparats*. (The Nazi party organization itself became transformed into just one more competing *apparat* among others soon after it achieved state power in Germany.) This has been even truer of the Soviet than of the Nazi regime. In both cases, the rivalry, the struggles, and the intrigues between the different power machines are what constitute the real substance of domestic politics.

Naturally, this war of all against all cannot be waged under the public eye, and precisely because of that is apt at any moment to erupt in physical violence—for once public opinion cannot be invoked to settle power conflicts, force becomes the only resort. To forestall this eventuality insofar as it threatens themselves, the various *apparats* seek to infiltrate each other with their agents—as we have seen in the army's case. Beria, with his MVD police machine, used to be a past master of this technique. (One example among many was his man Dekanosov, a career diplomat in the Soviet Foreign Office who served as embassy counsellor in Berlin in Hitler's time, and then as Russian minister to Sweden; along with Beria's other chief clients, he was executed at the same time as his master.) Stalin had an entirely unofficial *apparat*, a kitchen cabinet whose members were used to infiltrate every other power machine and keep them under supervision. Today, we can be sure,

Malenkov, Khrushchev, Molotov, and the rest each have their clients outside as well as inside the government departments they respectively head.

In other words, every big Soviet boss would seem to have a personal, unofficial clientele in addition to his official one. Since, however, he tries to keep the first one secret, room is left for all kinds of double-dealing, and double and even triple agents seem to abound on the higher echelons of Soviet power: men whose allegiance is ostensibly given to one master but really belongs to another—or to none except the one who appears to be winning out. The relations between these various agents sometimes become inextricably complicated, to the Soviet bosses themselves as well as the outside observer—which is why, presumably, the Kremlin strikes out so wildly and blindly and in so many different directions in moments of internal crisis, and destroys so many innocent people.

OF COURSE, all this would only go to show that the task of deciphering Soviet reality was even more hopeless than one assumed in the first place. This is not so. However shifting and fluid it may be in detail, the institution itself of *chefstvo* is quite rigid, and its functioning relatively easy to follow. Even more than Europe under feudalism, the Communist world is ruled by the principle of "*nulle homme sans seigneur*," and this, to reiterate, furnishes the investigator with a reliable starting point and a secure base of investigatory operations.

The first thing to do in trying to determine the political alignment of a high Soviet leader is to trace his official career back to its beginnings. It is safe to assume that he was a loyal client of his first official boss. But does his subsequent career show that he has abandoned this original allegiance? The question is not too hard to answer: the official gazette, or *moniteur*, of the USSR is not reticent about positions occupied, promotions, and demotions, as long as these are *official*. (It is assumed that the investigator has prepared himself for his job by learning Russian, and that he applies himself to Soviet publications and the Soviet press as his prime and main source of material.) Important political appointments are sometimes kept secret for a while, but here another feature of the Soviet system, its great addiction to protocol, comes to our help and often we can learn of these before they are formally announced. Protocol demands, and high officials themselves

insist, that they be listed in the press in the order of their real power or rank on such ceremonial occasions as a formal reception or the signing of the obituary notice of a high Soviet dignitary. Such notices often tell more than the "big" political news stories sent out by Tass, and should be constantly and carefully scanned. Of course, some skill is necessary before they can be correctly interpreted, but this is not hard to acquire.

The use of this part of the method can be illustrated by the case of Saburov, one of the top economic administrators of the USSR and a full member of the party Presidium, who was recently appointed Vice Premier. Saburov began his career under Voznesensky in the central planning agency, so the latter must be regarded as his first patron. Voznesensky's own political line is easy to distinguish: he wrote for publication, and later on his writings were publicly condemned. He belonged to the extreme left wing in the Politburo, and was Andrei Zhdanov's closest collaborator. Zhdanov died in 1948, and Voznesensky's name disappeared from the press in the spring of 1949. Did Saburov remain loyal to him? How could he have, since he succeeded Voznesensky as chief of the central planning agency? This would indicate that he had already "betrayed" his boss before his fall. But whom did he betray him to?

The date of Saburov's promotion gives us the clue. The spring of 1949 saw a general reshuffling of Soviet leadership, with Zhdanov's clients being replaced in numbers by Malenkov's, which would identify Saburov's new allegiance. But is such a coincidence enough to justify this inference? Of itself it would not satisfy the scrupulous investigator. He looks for confirmation, and—in this case—finds it; at the 19th Congress of the Russian Communist party in 1952, Saburov was elected to the Presidium along with other men more definitely known to be Malenkov clients; in December 1953 he was made Vice Premier, at a time when Malenkov was promoting all his close supporters among the economic bosses. This would, on the face of it, make a clear case for Saburov as a Malenkov client.

However, when it comes to political relations inside the USSR one can never be completely sure—at least not until the man is shot. Could Saburov have been a secret client of Beria's at the same time that he was an open one of Malenkov? If he was, none of the other Soviet higher-ups know about it, for his two latest

promotions both came at moments when Beria men were being demoted. Could Saburov, on the other hand, have served as one of Stalin's personal agents? Hardly, since he rose fastest after Stalin's death. For all these reasons, then, it seems permissible to class Saburov as a faithful "*Malenkovets*."

However, Saburov's case shows the limitations as well as the relative easiness of the method of investigation I am describing. That method does not provide fixed, immutable results, but rather proposes problems that require further investigation and research with each new day, their solution never being final.

Here the time factor comes in. The Soviet leaders cannot permanently conceal their doings from the world, but for a while they are able to conceal much. Today the essential facts of Beria's biography are clear, but two years ago, in 1952, some of these facts were not, and at that time knowledge of them—especially as they related to his shifts in political line—would have been much more useful to the West than it is now. A few years from now we shall probably know even more about Beria, but by then the practical value of that knowledge will have been further diminished. If the West is to be able to make full use of its information about the internal workings of the USSR, obviously it is essential that such information be up to date.

But, again, the investigator should not throw up his hands in despair at the task—or think it is the only useful one. The past internal history of the Soviet Union is a vast field and has still hardly been opened up by researchers. It is also a fruitful field, for the more we learn about that past and the better we understand it, the more likely we are to narrow the margin of error in the present and future. Neglect of the historical perspective has actually been the source of some of the West's most grievous mistakes vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, mistakes made by statesmen and journalists alike because of the failure to see that certain of the original guiding principles of Soviet policy still remain in force.

THE official Soviet gazette, the obituary announcements, and the lists of guests at formal receptions in Moscow are not our only sources of information about the workings of the *chefstvo*. There is also the press at large: editorials, reports of speeches, feature articles in magazines, and so on. Inevitably, political antagonisms find some sort of expression in the

Soviet press, especially at critical moments. As thoroughgoing as Bolshevik totalitarianism may be, it cannot bottle up everything. True, outspoken polemics—aside from the invective showered on a completely defeated and doomed faction—are excluded in public, but clients on the secondary levels of power will still seek to express, if only indirectly, loyalty to their respective patrons on top, and opposition to the enemies of those patrons. This they can do in articles and speeches by invoking the name of their respective protectors, by quoting from their writings and speeches, or by citing the favorite names and passages used by the protectors themselves. Scrutiny reveals that the different machines, factions, and political groupings inside the Soviet regime usually quote correspondingly different people and different texts.

Quotation and citation are, then, the principal tolerated means of taking sides publicly in the Soviet Union. This is well understood by Communist journalists and politicians—outside as well as inside the Soviet world—and it defines the etiquette of their debates and controversies. The investigator who has learned to understand this etiquette has mastered a chief part of the method of lifting corners of the Iron Curtain.

The investigator asks first of all: who, exactly, is the "authority" cited in each case? As we now know, it is important in assessing the changing policies of the Soviet regime to note whether Stalin, Lenin, or even Marx, is being invoked. The leader who continues to refer to Stalin proclaims thereby his desire to keep Stalinist policy alive; if he refers to Lenin, or Marx, it means that he implicitly advocates a revision of Stalinism. However, the direct significance of such references tends to be even greater if the name of someone still alive is invoked.

Between March 23, last year, and the first days of July, Malenkov's name was cited but once in *Pravda*—unmistakable evidence of his jeopardized position at that time. But his name reappeared immediately after Beria's arrest, and has since appeared more and more frequently. However, during those same months in which Moscow's *Pravda* was silent about Malenkov, the *Pravda* of Kiev, which was the mouthpiece of Melnikov, then Communist boss of the Ukraine, mentioned him no less than seventeen times; and the lone mention of Malenkov in Moscow's *Pravda* during that time was in an article by the same Melnikov. This would in-

dicate that, despite his lack of support in Moscow, Malenkov could count upon the unqualified backing of the boss of the Ukraine in the months before Beria's fall. It also indicates that the mechanical collection and collation of references to names in the Soviet press promise a safer basis for statements about political alignments and trends inside the USSR than any amount of speculation about the ultimate aims of Bolshevik policy.

Another illustration. For years adherents of the left wing of the Communist party, outside and inside Russia, identified themselves by quoting Zhdanov, while adherents of the right wing would quote Malenkov. During 1953 the French Communists began quoting Zhdanov less and less, and Malenkov more and more; this was a clear sign of the growing ascendancy of their right wing and its leader, Duclos. But admitted that one could distinguish the supporters of Zhdanov from those of Malenkov—how could one tell, on the other hand, that Zhdanov was the spokesman of extremism, and Malenkov of caution? Obviously, not by simply counting their citations in the Communist press. It was a question of the political contexts of these citations, and it became important to note *what* was quoted as well as *who*.

As you get used to reading the Soviet press, you discover that its columns are filled mostly with quotations, direct and indirect. This renders them on the face of it very boring and depressing reading matter. But at the same time it offers the key with which to unlock the realities behind all the verbiage, and it is possession of this key that makes it necessary, and interesting, to wade through the verbiage. Little is printed in the Communist press that does not depend, in wording even more than in meaning, on the text of some party decision, some leader's speech, or some doctrine laid down by the founding fathers of Communism. These quotations are not haphazard, but carefully selected, and the principle of selection is what matters in each case.

However, things do come out in the press now and then that are neither direct nor indirect quotations. When their meaning is clear and unambiguous, they must be accounted as constituting important events in Soviet history. For then they create, not only a new policy, but new Communist doctrine. Thus certain "new" words and phrases suddenly appearing in the press after Stalin's death—"Soviet legali-

ty," "care for the immediate needs of the citizen," etc. etc.—revealed the intention of one important faction to undertake a thoroughgoing retreat from Stalinism. These new words and phrases were not, however, to be interpreted according to their meaning in ordinary usage, but rather in terms of the degree to which they departed from previous doctrine. They meant a change simply because they were unprecedented.

Much more often, the new line and the new doctrine appear in the trappings of the old. Then only the initiated can perceive the change, which will be signified more often than not by the minute alteration of an accepted formula. In a free press, such things as the substitution of a term like "medium peasant" for "peasant" plain and simple would have little importance, but the Soviet politician and journalist is bound to the literal text of official formulas as if by criminal law, and the smallest verbal change he makes in them must reflect either opposition or an authoritative change of line.

But still another point should be kept in mind. Admiral Halsey tells in his memoirs how the American navy during the late war used to intersperse its coded messages with sheer gibberish in order to confuse the enemy and distract him from what was not gibberish. The same practice obtains in the Soviet press: anything in it that does not follow accepted texts, or say something unmistakably new, must be deemed gibberish whose only function is to mislead the public, at home and abroad. However, the investigator must learn how to strip down the empty verbiage and see whether it conceals a core of real meaning. Sometimes it does.

AT POINTS like these one has to realize that Communist doctrine, as established by Stalinist practice, claims roots in a truth discovered and laid down once and for all in the past. Constant reference to the first codifiers of this truth and its officially certified subsequent interpreters must be made in order to understand what is being said. And it must also be remembered that the thought processes of Soviet Communism in good part parody Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and sense cannot be made of them if examined under Western categories.

The investigator must know the history and content of numberless party controversies in the past as thoroughly as a learned theologian

would the countless disputes that marked the course of Christian dogma. He must know the formulas used by the various parties in these controversies, and the historical situations for which they were devised. In the long course of Bolshevism's inner-party struggles, formulas have been developed to answer practically every question that might arise. When confronted by any new eventuality in Soviet affairs, one must first relate and compare the words announcing it, with the formulas used in the past. As should be apparent by now, Soviet thought, being fundamentally superstitious, lays great stress upon words and terminology; with experience, the investigator should be able to penetrate to the real political meaning that lies behind these, just as the anthropologist can often read a kind of logic behind the magical formulas of primitive peoples.

In June 1952 Boleslaw Bierut, the president of Poland, made a speech on the economic situation in which he launched the slogan: "We must direct our course towards the medium peasant." This passed completely unnoticed outside Poland, yet the phrase had historical connotations: between 1925 and 1927 it had been the official slogan of the bloc formed between Stalin and Bukharin. In 1928, when Stalin broke with Bukharin and started the compulsory collectivization of Russian agriculture, he discarded this slogan, and it was over the question of the "medium peasant" that Bukharin was first brought low (to be doomed later on to physical "liquidation"). The revival of a formula once so dramatically condemned should have caused a sensation, and was to be interpreted as the sign of an impending struggle over agrarian policy within the whole Communist world. As we know, it was not so interpreted—all the less because Bierut has not yet been able, in Poland, to put the slogan into effect. Nevertheless, his use of it was a sure sign of things to come, if not in Poland then elsewhere behind the Iron Curtain.

Over a year later, in September 1953, Krushchev made a speech—become famous by now—in which he admitted, in effect, the utter failure of Stalin's collectivization program. Western comment dealt largely with the price raises and other statistically accessible measures he announced, and overlooked the mere possibility that differences of opinion over agriculture, long smoldering under the surface among the Soviet leadership, were now com-

ing into the open. Very shortly afterwards, a struggle between the advocates of retreat and those of a new offensive on the collectivization front broke out all along the line, with the official slogan of the former—as we hear it, for example, in Hungary—being the “medium peasant,” and that of the latter the same as the one proclaimed by Stalin from 1929 on: “Class struggle in the village!”

A correct reading of these formulas would have enabled observers almost two years ago to identify the patronage groups involved, with the underlying political issues dividing them, and it would also have made it possible to predict the current struggle over agrarian policy. One lesson the whole episode drives home is that the investigator of Soviet affairs should not necessarily become uneasy when his interpretations of certain formulas are not immediately borne out by known events.

No formula is ever used accidentally in the Communist world, since a “deviation”—from the texts currently in force, that is—can have grave consequences for the person responsible. Nor is there such a thing, either, as an accidental “mistake”; responsible party functionaries are well versed in the sacred writings (not for nothing do even members of the various central committees still have to submit to periodical indoctrination courses). And in the USSR errors in general are treated, not as blunders, but as expressions of bad faith and deliberate intent. Hence Western observers should have pricked up their ears almost automatically when Bierut said what he did in June 1952. . . .

Of course, the same yardstick cannot be applied everywhere in the Soviet world. What appears in Moscow's *Pravda* has greater sympathetic value than what appears in the capitals of the federal republics or the satellite countries, which has in turn more such value than what is printed in the provincial papers. The specialized periodicals put out by the various *apparats* or government departments, such as the army's *Red Star* and the Ministry of Agriculture's *Agriculture*, have particular value as source material because they are edited with extreme care. Needless to say, special circumstances apart, the merely local press of the USSR and its satellites has the least source value.

IN THE final analysis, the method of investigation into Soviet reality that I have been

outlining can be reduced to two rather elementary basic rules (which need, of course, to be applied with intelligence). First, as far as questions of personality are concerned, any one step in a Soviet leader's career must be interpreted in the light of everything ascertainable about his previous career, which has in turn to be interpreted through the *chefstvo* system. Second, political issues must be interpreted in the light of *formulas*, doctrinal and otherwise, and their history; and such interpretation cannot be safely concluded until the whole history of the given formula has been established from its first enunciation on. Moreover, those formulas which are intelligible only to the initiated are, as a rule, much more important than the explicit facts that may or may not accompany them, however important the former may seem in themselves.

Thus it was wrong to concentrate on the details of the new Soviet agrarian policy announced in September 1953, to the total neglect of the rags and tags of old and new formulas that littered the fifty-odd pages of official text in which the announcement was made. Statistics and figures are far from sacred in the Soviet world, but formula and shibboleth are. Figures can be means to deception, or can turn out to be details of plans never to be fulfilled; but shibboleths, if wrongly or ineptly applied, can amount to life or death for those who utter them. The formulas with which Khrushchev sowed his September speech were garnered from all periods and all tendencies of world Communism, a veritable potpourri that reflected a hasty, hectic, and altogether superficial compromise between a host of incompatibles. Yet the experienced observer could read all this, precisely because of its chaotic nature, as the sign of an approaching storm inside Communist ranks. Not the figures Khrushchev gave—many of which were downright fantastic—but the way in which he tried to string together conflicting formulas and conflicting views should have attracted attention.

ONE final example, a textbook one that I have chosen to conclude with because it combines all the aspects of my method of “content analysis” that have already been separately discussed. (This example involves, incidentally, a piece of evidence once before discussed in these pages by this same writer, who then reached conclusions which, he hopes, have not been altogether falsified by subsequent

events.*) On January 4, 1953, the Central Committee of the German Socialist Unity party passed a resolution on the "teachings of the Slansky case" that attracted much attention, first of all because it revealed an extreme anti-Semitic tendency reminiscent of Goebbels' propaganda; and secondly, because it indicated an impending decision in the struggle within the East German Communist organization between Ulbricht and Dahlem.

Two other important aspects of this notorious resolution passed, however, almost unnoticed. Malenkov was quoted at inordinate length, and so identified with the anti-Semitic campaign that had just reached its first climax in the Prague trials. By quoting him in this fashion, *and* by adding his own yelp to the anti-Semitic chorus, Ulbricht, the animator of the resolution, proclaimed himself a Malenkov client. But even more important: while Malenkov was cited at length, Stalin was *quoted with a mere half-sentence dating from 1910*. Such a deliberate affront could have been offered only by people sure of that tyrant's approaching downfall, or else out of the reach of his retribution. Otherwise it was sure suicide. It was primarily on the strength of the evidence found in this resolution that I then predicted, in print, Stalin's imminent death—which, sure enough, came seven weeks later.

Of course, the East German resolution was an unusually meaningful document that invited the most extreme conclusions because of the extent to which it went beyond what was customary in public statements in the Soviet world. Yet it would be a great mistake to consider it unique. Documents and statements of the same kind, if not of quite the same daring, are made public behind the Iron Curtain every few months; yet it is still seldom that they are assessed at their true importance and interpreted in terms of their real meaning.

THE Ulbricht resolution also demonstrated, at least to me, that direct "inside" information from the Soviet world ought not as a rule to be regarded as superior in value to the results

of that method of "content analysis" to which I have devoted this article. At the time of the East German resolution not a few Moscow observers noticed that something strange was going on, and there was no lack of straws in the wind to show that Stalin was in a political as well as physical decline. Yet all this still remained guesswork, whereas the mere counting of the words devoted to Malenkov and Stalin, respectively, in a satellite resolution gave an unambiguous answer to the question whether any faction at the Communist top intended Stalin's overthrow.

This is not to belittle the value of direct information from behind the Iron Curtain. Admittedly, much of it is "planted" by Communist agents themselves, but a lot else of it is solid and trustworthy; and on the most abstract and general level of political information it must be combined, or collated, with the results of the "content analysis" as applied to the Soviet press. But to effect this combination on any lower and more concrete level would be unwise. As in scientific research, information subject to different criteria of exactness should not be fused. The same is true with political information about the USSR.

Some "confidential" or "inside" information can be rejected out of hand as totally incompatible with positive facts derived from content analysis. What survives does not constitute, for the content analyst, additional information, but additional questions. These he will use to formulate problems for further investigation.

This or that patronage relation, this or that political trend has been rendered plausible by direct information; does content analysis serve to confirm or contradict it, or does it require the investigator to leave the problem hanging until further information arrives? The student of Soviet affairs ought not to worry unduly about unsolved problems: they are an essential ingredient of his work. In a society where murder in high places is almost as prevalent as secrecy and dissimulation—even as to the barest and simplest facts—the truth will always out. The next big crisis, never too long in the offing, with its inevitably ferocious dénouement, will most likely bring light on the most stubborn current problems about the USSR.

*See "Was Malenkov Behind the Anti-Semitic Plot?" May 1953.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Germany's Jews and Restitution

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to call attention to a number of regrettable errors of both "fact" and judgment in Hal Lehrman's article "The New Germany and Her Remaining Jews" (December 1953). Specifically, I take strong exception to his references to the activities in Germany of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO), on whose Board of Directors and Executive Committee I have been a member for the past four years.

Mr. Lehrman's article is an unfortunate departure from the standards of fairness and balance which COMMENTARY has maintained so consistently over the years. On the basis of statements made by a JRSO critic, and apparently without any serious effort to check their validity with JRSO officials, he arrived at a series of value judgments which, if left unanswered, would do much to weaken the Organization's position in future negotiations with the German Reich and the City of Berlin, as well as the confidence of Jewish groups the world over in its purposes and accomplishments.

The statement is made that although there is disagreement among German Jewish leaders concerning the future prospects of Jews in Germany, "they do not see why world Jewry should go out of its way to dim them. Organized German Jewry is hopping mad over the distribution of proceeds from the settlement with the Germans on heirless Jewish property and other claims." The implication here is quite obviously that the Jewish organizations who comprise JRSO have deliberately gone out of their way, in the distribution and allocation of funds, to hinder the renewal and strengthening of Jewish community life in Germany.

This is simply not true. In direct contradiction to the quotation attributed to Dr. Hendrik G. van Dam, executive secretary of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, that "under pressure a few communities agreed to accept JRSO settlements in the early period because they were afraid that otherwise they'd get nothing at all," the fact is that JRSO concluded a series of settlements freely and openly arrived at with every Jewish community in the U.S.-controlled area in Germany, including

Berlin, Munich, and Stuttgart, except for four. Further, these settlements were arrived at not in the early period of JRSO activity, but rather as recently as the winter of 1952/53 for Munich, and the autumn of 1951 for Berlin. In this context it must be noted that the Jewish population surviving today in the U.S.-controlled area of Germany represents only about 5 per cent of the pre-Hitler Jewish population.

The settlement with Munich is a representative case in point. The JRSO has turned over to it not only *all* of the former community property, but also about 50 per cent of all local property formerly owned by private Jewish foundations and trusts. Settlements with other communities have also displayed a similar degree of consideration for communal requirements. . . .

I pass quickly over Dr. van Dam's rather snide comments concerning participation of representatives of Jews in Germany in JRSO deliberations. Again, this does not accord with the facts—and Dr. van Dam should be the first to know this, since he himself as well as a number of other representatives of the German Jewish communities have participated in them here in New York as recently as December 1953. More important are his comments on the Joint Distribution Committee's supplementary grants to the various Jewish communities in Germany, and Mr. Lehrman's own views to the effect that much of the difficulty stems from the fact that JRSO got started too soon after the war, while the Jewish Trust Corporation in the British Zone "waited until things settled down," with the result that the latter, "unlike JRSO," gave the "organized communities in the British-controlled area satisfactory representation and priority for their claims."

On the matter of JDC supplementary aid, what Mr. Lehrman completely failed to note was the fact that since 1949 JRSO has turned over to JDC funds equal to 75 per cent of all JDC expenditures made in Germany during that period for relief and rehabilitation. In effect, therefore, the Gemeinden have received both property and funds directly from JRSO, as well as supplementary aid from JDC, with much of the latter coming from JRSO funds.

As for the timing of JRSO operations, I would say that JRSO did not, as Mr. Lehrman

seems to feel, get started too soon, but rather quite late. It began its operations in Germany in August 1948 following the enactment of a (special) regulation by the United States Military Government authorizing JRSO to function. This was already some three years after the Potsdam Conference which established quadripartite occupation of Germany. The deadline for filing all claims for restitution of property and other assets was set by U.S. Military Government at December 31, 1948. Between August and December 1948, therefore, the JRSO field staff in Germany prepared and presented 163,000 individual claims covering virtually every piece of Jewish property taken by various means from their owners since 1933. Had this not been done, or had JRSO launched its activities at a later date, there would not today be any restitution of property or funds of any kind. This includes all heirless property for which JRSO is the sole recognized claimant agency, as well as many individual claims which were originally covered by JRSO and subsequently relinquished to legal heirs who did not file claims within the designated deadline period.

The Jewish Trust Corporation in the British Zone began its operations many months afterwards, when the British authorities finally enacted a Restitution Law in their zone. The Corporation did not wait until "things settled down" before entering into operations, but rather acted with the utmost speed as soon as legal permission to do so was granted.

It is most regrettable that Mr. Lehrman, whom I admire quite highly, should have presented such a distorted impression of JRSO activities in Germany. . . .

DAVID L. GLICKMAN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Mr. Lehrman's piece on Germany, in spite of some understatement about the desire of people in Israel to leave Israel, an excellent and objective piece of reporting—very rare today in the Jewish press. I hope his forthcoming piece on Israel will maintain this high standard.

HANS KOHN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his interesting article "The New Germany and Her Remaining Jews," Hal Lehrman reports, among other things, on the activities of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization. Referring to the situation of former German Jews now living outside of Germany and Israel, he states: "But if there are ex-German Jews in

London, for example, who are old and broken and in need of assistance, it does seem a bit difficult to understand why something like Jewish Agency expenses in Germany should have priority on the proceeds from the liquidation of German Jewish claims against the present German government."

In its brochure issued about two years ago, under the title "Betrachtungen zum Rückerstattungsrecht" (Reflections on the Right of Restitution), JRSO voiced the same opinion: "The need, especially among elderly emigrants in the United States, England, and Israel, is great because their means and strength are exhausted. They require quick help and welfare assistance, as do also the Jews who are still in Germany. It is the task of the large organizations in foreign countries, organized in the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, to provide the means for . . . emigration, settlement, rehabilitation, and charity on a worldwide scale for the Jewish population which previously was settled in Germany . . . because there is no one else who can do this job." . . .

Unfortunately, JRSO so far has not lived up to this program except for one allocation of \$200,000 recently granted to a philanthropic organization of Jewish emigrés from Germany in New York for the purpose of housing fifty out of approximately one thousand indigent old people in Greater New York alone.

The London Council of Jews from Germany, under the leadership of Rabbi Leo Baeck, has been trying for over four years to get a fair share of JRSO funds. . . . In view of the fact that almost all of the property recovered by JRSO was of German-Jewish origin, Dr. Baeck pointed out on behalf of the Council, Jews who emigrated from Germany after 1933 have a legitimate claim to a share in the funds representing the proceeds of values produced by generations of German Jews.

It is to be hoped that JRSO will finally find it possible to accede to the just request of the Council.

FREDERICK W. BORCHARDT

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Hal Lehrman, writing in your December issue on "The New Germany and Her Remaining Jews," refers to the text of the sermon which I delivered on Rosh Hashanah Eve in Berlin at the rededication of the Pestalozzi Synagogue. He complains that he missed the Hebrew text. Unfortunately he also missed the German text, at least in its true translation, which is all the more surprising as I translated this text into English for the benefit of the many American soldiers attending this Service.

But even without all this, he should have known that the text is taken from I Samuel 16:8, where Samuel proclaims these words in a situation similar to that which presented itself to the Congregation on that evening: Samuel wanted to express his feelings of thankfulness towards God who, after so many terrible sufferings and hardships, had shown His mercy to those who had survived and whom he had delivered from the hands of the cruel oppressors, with the immortal words: "Hitherto has the Lord helped us!" (*Bishierher hat uns Gott geholfen!*) Mr. Lehrman changes the Biblical text arbitrarily by translating "*Bisher hat uns Gott geholfen!*" which, of course, is something quite different from the actual meaning—"bisher" meaning: "In the past, up till now," while "*bishierher*" means: "hitherto," up to this state which we have attained now, i.e. having escaped, through God's mercy, all the dangers and tribulations of the past. . . .

(Rabbi Dr.) H. SCHREIBER
London, England

Mr. Lehrman Replies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Please let me say first that my getting slugged for a COMMENTARY article is so rare I'm almost enjoying it. I don't know how many dozen pieces I've had the honor of writing for you these past eight years—but practically never a growl, or *anything*, about them in this section. But write a little bit about Germany and you're a shooting-gallery pigeon.

1. Dr. Schreiber is quite correct, of course, when he changes "*bisher*" back to "*bishierher*"—though I see small difference in English between his "hitherto" and my "until now." But what of it? The former rabbi of Potsdam continues to miss the point. I do not presume to argue with the prophet Samuel about the appropriateness of his noble text to *his* community. But was Dr. Schreiber's half-hour sermon on the mercies they enjoyed despite Hitlerism the aptest way to comfort the survivors of decimated Berlin Jewry?

2. Mr. Glickman has given the JRSO's case in full, and there is no room here to engage him in detail. I would note only that he makes two untenable implications of a general nature. The first is that JRSO has never been wrong. Mr. Borchardt above seems to disagree with him in one instance. At least four communities in Germany—and the West German courts which sustained this position—disagree with him in another. Mr. Glickman's own avoidance of comment on my article's reference to attitudes of certain JRSO representatives toward their German Jewish clients suggests a third. His

other inference is that my report did nothing but defend the adversaries of JRSO on all counts. In fact, it criticized the German Jewish leadership and it deplored the court verdict against JRSO. A disputant may want to be declared absolutely right in every particular, but a reporter does not have to oblige. My intention was to show the shades of gray on both sides, not to pretend that one is all white, the other all black. I stand by my conclusion: "The mischief is that JRSO apparently was not generous enough in the beginning, and made wiser offers too late. . . . The enlistment of a high-level arbiter . . . ought to be a prime order of current business. . . ."

3. Although no correspondent has noted it, my article did commit an important error which I welcome this chance to set right. I wrote that Israel, through the Jewish Agency, would receive proceeds from that part of German reparations which had actually been earmarked by Bonn for Jews *outside* Israel. The reverse is true, as I have learned since leaving Germany. Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett was eager to retain the strong support of world Jewish organizations in the parleys with Bonn. He therefore agreed with the Conference on Material Claims that, no matter what the eventual total grant of reparations would be, a full 15 per cent should be reserved for work on behalf of Nazism's victims not residing in Israel. It happened, however, that negotiations with the Germans ended in two *separate* accords. Bonn committed itself to reparations worth \$715 million for Israel, \$107 million for the Conference. The latter figure is less than 15 per cent of the \$822 million total. I understand now that Israel is nevertheless fulfilling its prior pledge and gradually making the difference—some \$15 million—available to the Conference from Israel's share for work outside the State. My only excuse for not having known and reported this is that apparently the Israeli and Jewish Agency representatives whom I consulted in Germany didn't know it either. At any rate, none saw fit to mention it during long conversations on the subject of reparations.

HAL LEHRMAN

New York City

Who Conforms and Who Dissents?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of the first issue of *Dissent* ("Philistine Leftism," February 1954), Mr. Nathan Glazer is very generous to me: he implies that I escape "the blight" he invents for the magazine as a whole, and even suggests that it may be properly assumed that some thinking went into my essay. I am afraid that I cannot

thank him, for he misunderstands: I, too, share many of the moods and ideas against which he directs his spleen.

The editors of *Dissent*, I assume, will take the time to explain to your readers something of the true nature of their magazine. I know of no set of men better able to defend themselves on such points as Mr. Glazer raises; and I have no connection, other than as a friend and contributor, with *Dissent*. Yet someone, I feel, should indicate the unfairness of your publication of Mr. Glazer's curiously disappointed expectations. . . .

1. One of Mr. Glazer's techniques, perhaps the major one, is to contrast the brief statement of intent with the contents of the first issue. He treats this beginning issue as if it were a finished book. That it is a periodical, just now underway, is of course its essence. Perhaps Mr. Glazer's training as an editor of COMMENTARY—which is no true dialogue—has led him to misunderstand what a magazine whose editors have just that in mind is all about. How else can we explain that he apparently expects the first issue to present an alternative to the foreign policy of the United States, a full-scale and, of course, brand-new orientation to the problems of atomic war and imperialism, a reformulation of the meaning of socialism in our time—and all this studded with numerous and "positive ideas."

To take the view that because this is not accomplished in issue Number One the magazine is an "unmitigated disaster"; to try to kill off the venture by a symbolic act of vituperation: that is to strike at the very possibility of our ever—as an intellectual community—getting at such problems. . . .

2. There is a point that is more important than such premature judgment on this new magazine. I suspect, although I cannot know, that what Mr. Glazer really objects to is the *mood* of *Dissent*, and that we are really dealing with two contrasting moods, rather than directly with ideas. In reading *Dissent's* first issue, one feels, above all, a rejection of the prevailing mood of American liberalism, and the intention to establish an opposition mood.

Now moods are no test of the value of ideas. But it ought to be made clear that it is often necessary to break through a prevailing mood and to try to articulate an alternative one before one can think freely again. And this is especially true of political ideas. Routineers, of course, happily produce commentaries within the prevailing mood, which they thus elaborate and justify. There comes a time, and I think perhaps we now again come to it, when to think freshly, to define reality again, to try to find a way out of a trap, the prevailing mood has

got to be debunked and transcended. This is what The Dissenters are trying to do. . . .

I happen to think that the vocabulary sometimes used in their first issue is not the best means of expressing the mood behind it. But surely it is the first requirement of criticism to be able quickly to translate diverse vocabularies into one another, and so get to the root of the moods and the ideas expressed. Surely it ought to be the place of any politically alert intellectual to support or to fight against such an effort as *Dissent* with an understanding of the meaning of that effort, successful or not, for the joining of intelligence and politics, now so obviously alien in America. "If a thing is worth doing at all," G. K. Chesterton once wrote, "it is worth doing badly."

3. The philistine always uses the power of conventional opinion and prevailing mood to beat down new beginnings. The mood that *Dissent* rejects does now *prevail* widely; it is heavily subsidized and, for many, easy to live with. Yet, with all these advantages, the philistine cannot always react with mind, for he is filled with anxiety. That is why his strategy is particularly damaging to the free-swinging production of a full range of political ideas. For he is trying to kill off the mood of basic dissent, with which he cannot live, but without which the politics of culture cannot go on.

It is as if out of their own fear and emptiness liberal minds today have formed a little stifling society in which they gently harass one another into a condition of genteel sterility. They have no sense of domestic crisis, if only because they feel no values of theirs to be imperiled—except of course by Communists. This one official fear they have substituted for all those anxieties that they must feel, given their biographies, but dare not confront, much less convert into explicit intellectual concerns. Go back and read such assertions as James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, and you will see something of what is absent from the mood that now determines the intellectual liberalism that prevails. You will also understand something of what, I at least believe, The Dissenters are groping for.

4. Perhaps something of the mood that one finds in the pages of *Dissent's* first issue can be grasped by remembering the words of Henry Adams who before the first war wrote:

"Resistance to something was the law of New England nature; the boy looked out on a world with the instinct of resistance; for numberless generations his predecessors had viewed the world chiefly as a thing to be reformed, filled with evil forces to be abolished, and they saw no reason to suppose that they had wholly succeeded in the abolition; the duty was un-

changed. That duty implied not only resistance to evil, but hatred of it. Politics, as a practice, whatever its professions, had always been the systematic organization of hatreds. . . ."

If you dislike "hatred," the point I wish to make is as well made by fury or love or wrath, or passion of any sort: something that smashes the hollow mask that has today replaced American liberalism.

In their lack of insurgent imagination, American liberals today have vested their "hatreds" in the external and safely faraway enemy and against anyone who would irritate them in their need to love everything that, "after all," is American. Rather than think politically, they feel sentimentally about what they celebrate as the mere variousness of America; they fragment and de-humanize all problems in the name of powerful practicality; they are shrill in resistance to any criticism of the vulgarities of American life.

Something of the anxieties and rigidities that underpin such features of American liberalism today must be the explanation for the unbuttoned tone of Mr. Glazer's outburst, and for the fact that a man as intelligent as he must be could not see, upon re-reading his draft, how morally curious and uncontrolled his little exercise in being the anxious finger-man for the liberal mood really is.

C. WRIGHT MILLS

Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Nat Glazer has got pretty hot under the collar about *Dissent*. It improves his style but not his judgment.

I agree with him on one point: personal motives should be left out of political argument. The editors of *Dissent* are no more virtuous than the editors of COMMENTARY, whatever the latter may say. And I regret the "vituperative intemperance" to which we all, at times, succumb. It is, however, a human and not a specifically socialist failing, as his review demonstrates. What else does he say?

1. He wants proof that conformism and civil liberty violations are spreading in the U.S. and rejects the *Nation's* "information" to that effect. Does he also reject that of the *New York Times*, the *Reporter*, and the American Civil Liberties Union? The Ford Foundation finds the evidence sufficient to invest \$15,000,000 in the Fund for the Republic, but Nat Glazer remains unconvinced. There was a time when one case of injustice could arouse the nation's conscience; now a mistaken case of injustice is enough to quiet his.

2. He asserts that "the editors" of *Dissent*

are "against" war and the U.S. defense of Korea; that, if we had our way, "the NKVD would be comfortably established today in Rome, Paris, and London"; and there follows a general exhortation of "the editors"—there are twelve of us—largely on the basis of some remarks by Lewis Coser and Irving Howe.

Now, COMMENTARY carries the statement that "the opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own. . . ." The editors of *Dissent* say plainly on the first page that "*Dissent* will not have any editorial position or statements. Each writer will speak for himself." Why does Nat Glazer not credit us with the same tolerance he assumes for himself?

Of course, the socialist editors of *Dissent*, like Quakers, Democrats, and Republicans, have no single position on war. Among them are pacifists opposing all war; supporters of a "Third Force" in Europe and Asia; and those, like Howe and myself, who support Western armed forces in Korea and Europe. As for the nonsense about the NKVD—really! Socialist Norway is NATO's outpost in Scandinavia against Swedish neutralism; Socialist Britain was America's staunchest ally in Europe and Korea; Bevan's call for some arms reduction anticipated that of Churchill and Eisenhower. The consistency of foreign policy due to national interest, surely, exceeds the inconstancy stemming from internal politics. Does Nat Glazer want to discuss specific policies or merely wave a flag?

The editors of *Dissent* do oppose world atomic suicide, and are less confident than Glazer that this is favored only by "inmates of insane asylums." Judging from his complaint that too many Americans are "rattling the atom bomb," Defense Secretary Wilson seems to agree with us.

3. He cannot discern the difference between our political position and that of Senator Taft, President Eisenhower, and Fulton Sheen. He should read us—and them—more assiduously.

Glazer observes that "pushing against opposition forces you to moderate your claims, strengthen your arguments, and be as concrete as possible." Now that he has had his untrammelled say in COMMENTARY, I invite his serious contribution to *Dissent*.

HAROLD ORLANS

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Reply

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Mills, Mr. Orlans, and I all agree I was angry when I reviewed the first issue of *Dissent*, but we disagree on what I was angry

about, though I think my review made that quite clear. It was not *Dissent's* mood, or its dislike for American foreign policy, or its concern for civil liberties (I am concerned, too)—it was its intellectual incompetence in even starting a discussion on these matters that angered me. Here was a magazine urging a mood of dissent but unable to explain why *Dissent* was necessary. Its logic seemed to be (to recur to one example): Lenin proved we should dislike imperialism; American foreign policy is really imperialistic; therefore we should dislike American foreign policy. If it had, as Mr. Mills does, called for new books like Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, we could at least argue about the condition of the sharecroppers today; if it had suggested, even by implication, what kind of policy it would like to see America pursue, instead of taking irrelevant potshots from an archaic position, we could argue about that (or I might agree); if it had talked in any concrete detail about what is happening to liberty in the United States today, we could argue about that, too (or I might again agree). But, as I wrote, it did none of these things: it seemed to have been written from a vague feeling of peevish unease, and those who were suffering from it, instead of trying to find out what was bothering them, decided straight off they could find the answers in Marx and his followers. It is sufficiently annoying when a child whines and won't tell you what it's whining about; it is infinitely more annoying when adults—and intellectuals to boot—do so.

ABOUT two points in Mr. Orlans' letter.

1. I did not ask in my review for proof that "conformism and civil liberties violations are spreading in the United States" (though if I had, Mr. Orlans would find it harder than he thinks to supply it: even the *New York Times*, the *Reporter*, and the Ford Foundation may err). I rather wanted to know just what *Dissent* meant when it used such phrases. There are more than a few people who think that any conviction of a Communist spy and any investigation of Communist influence in the federal government is a violation of civil liberties; and since there are, it obviously becomes of the greatest importance that people explain just what *they* mean when they talk about civil liberties. As so many people have recently recognized, the manner of discussion of these problems is today as important as the matter—what else is it that disturbs us about Senator McCarthy and his friends? I might agree with the editors of *Dissent* when they come to explain themselves, but this does not mean they should not have done so right off.

2. Of course many socialists favor the plac-

ing of American troops in Europe and Korea—I carefully explained in a footnote that there were socialists who did not share the attitudes of *Dissent*. I am glad to hear there are even editors of *Dissent* who favor Western armed forces in Europe and Korea, but I do not think it was possible to tell this from the first issue.

I am happy to read that *Dissent* does not take its private "test act," as laid down in the opening editorial statement, too seriously. At a time when conformity has become a major subject of discussion among intellectuals, I think the doors should be kept wide open—even for those who do not conform to the mood of *Dissent*.

This mood, by the way—of "domestic crisis," in Mr. Mills' words—is in fact the prevailing one today, and just in those conventional liberal circles that Mr. Mills thinks he is opposing. *Dissent's* "mood," with its charges of a crisis today in American liberty, represents merely the left wing of standard liberal opinion in this country. *Dissent* is distinguished from this standard liberal opinion by being also an expression of standard radical opinion, but emptied of all content and reduced to a mere self-righteous stance. It consequently becomes a question as to just who is conforming.

One last remark about my "intemperateness," which Mr. Orlans thinks makes things even between *Dissent* and me. *Dissent* attacked people's morals and motives because it disagrees with their ideas (Mr. Mills does the same when he finds my review "morally curious"). I attacked *Dissent's* ideas (or want thereof)—does he think there is an equality between mean-spirited and unsupported imputation of shameful personal motives, and an attack on ideas?

NATHAN GLAZER

New York City

Correction

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I think I owe it to your readers, as well as to myself, to point out that the article entitled "Western Alternative for the 'Backward Peoples'" which appeared in your February number had to be rather severely condensed for publication. This involved some omissions, and at least one slight misunderstanding which I feel bound to correct: in referring to the Russian Revolution of 1917 the text speaks of "the Kerensky Revolution of 1917." I had in mind the whole historical sequence starting in February 1917, and it was not my intention to single out any particular phase or individual, least of all one who played only a brief and not particularly distinguished part.

G. L. ARNOLD

London, England

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Capitalism and History

CAPITALISM AND THE HISTORIANS. Edited by F. A. HAYEK. University of Chicago Press. 188 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by H. STUART HUGHES

THE publication ten years ago of F. A. Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* was a major event in the intellectual history of the United States. As an able and scholarly polemic against socialism, it marked the beginning of that slow reorientation of sentiment—both in academic circles and among the general public—toward a more positive evaluation of the capitalist system which has marked the past decade. Professor Hayek's present volume can scarcely hope to have the same effect; it is a slighter effort, and the intellectual atmosphere it will encounter is far more sympathetic to its central thesis than was the case with a book appearing at the height of the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union and challenging the most cherished tenets of the preceding era of New Deal and Popular Front.

Moreover, *Capitalism and the Historians*, unlike its predecessor, is only in part a tract for the times. The six essays of which it is composed, including Professor Hayek's own introduction, fall into two fairly distinct categories. Three of them represent contributions by an Englishman, an American, and a Frenchman—all professionally concerned with economic history—directed toward the general subject of how capitalism has fared at the hands of historians. From these somewhat disparate efforts, Professor Hayek's introduction seeks to extract the dominant themes. And it soon transpires that the most intellectually stimulating and best developed single theme is the discussion by the British representative, T. S. Ashton, of the English factory system. Hence it is natural that the two essays which complete the volume, and are presented as organizationally distinct from the rest, should concern them-

selves with the economic history of early 19th-century England: to this second section Professor Ashton has again made the more telling contribution. With all respect to the editor, then, one may conclude that the book is at least as much Ashton's as Hayek's; what began as a subsidiary question has in effect proved to be the main show.

Or perhaps the following statement comes closer to the intention of the authors: Historians, Hayek and his colleagues argue, have in general judged capitalism over-harshly. And they have done so because the very study of economic history grew up in a context of social protest, and its methodology derived in large part from the work of Marx: even those who later repudiated Marxism retained the intellectual categories of their earlier allegiance. For their own part, Marx and Engels found the empirical evidence they needed in the Parliamentary inquiries on conditions in British factories and urban concentrations. Economic theory and moral indignation arose from a common source. And the same has been true of more recent economic historians. For the past hundred years, the English factory system of the early 19th century has served as the point from which conventional discussions of modern industrial capitalism have taken off. If, then, one could disprove what most historians have said about working-class conditions in England before 1830, the keystone of the anti-capitalist argument would have collapsed.

A REVIEWER might as well jump directly to the central discussion of what actually happened in England in the early decades of the 19th century. To do so means to neglect a number of the general statements that make this a lively and rewarding book—notably Hayek's comment that "the influence which the writers of history . . . exercise on public opinion is probably more immediate and extensive than that of the political theorists who launch new ideas," and the argument by the French rep-

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STUART E. ROSENBERG

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representative, Bertrand de Jouvenal, that intellectuals are almost of necessity inclined to be critical of capitalism, since their value scale is radically opposed to that of businessmen. But these, however interesting, are subjective comments peripheral to the main argument. As Hayek puts it, there are "three related questions—What were the facts? How did the historians present them? And Why?" The essays he has collected "deal primarily with the first."

The central argument runs as follows. The introduction of the factory system and the growth of industrial cities in England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries did indeed witness overcrowding, long hours, the exploitation of children, and all the other ills that have been attributed by historians to them. But these social evils cannot be blamed on *capitalism* as such. They were simply incidents of a growth and concentration of industrial activity that might as well have manifested themselves (as in the Soviet Union after 1928) under some other regime than that of *laissez-faire* capitalism. Moreover, it is not true that this change depressed the standard of living of the British working classes. The poor were already in a wretched state—worse off, perhaps, in

rural areas than they were to be in the swollen cities. Nor was the new urban proletariat an existing population which capitalism "degraded to a lower level." It was rather "an additional population which was enabled to grow up by the new opportunities for employment which capitalism provided."

Indeed, most of the sufferings of the urban poor in the period 1800-1820 can be ascribed to temporary dislocations caused by rapid urban growth and intensified by the shortages and limitations on new building that accompanied the decade and a half of warfare against Napoleon. By 1830 such conditions were already beginning to right themselves: the Parliamentary inquiries and the beginnings of factory legislation that resulted from them were both unnecessary and politically motivated. They represented a revenge by the Tories for their own defeat in the Reform Bill of 1832. Carefully refraining from an examination of conditions in the countryside, where the Tory squirearchy ruled supreme, the commissions presented selective and "loaded" evidence that was later to give anti-capitalist historians more than the ammunition they needed.

From most of the foregoing no sensible or informed historian will dissent. It is not true, as the publisher's blurb claims, that Hayek's new book "is likely to land as a bombshell among the professional historians." The present reviewer can personally vouch for the general acceptance of Hayek's and Ashton's theses even as far from the centers of light as the American West Coast. Yet to suggest that Hayek and his colleagues are occasionally inclined to charge off in the manner of Don Quixote is not to deny value to their book. They have performed a very useful service in presenting in compact, readable form material that has hitherto been tucked away in detailed economic histories or in the pages of learned journals. And a number of their arguments are advanced with a freshness and vigor that command admiration—more particularly their exposé of the political motivation and selective presentation of evidence in the Parliamentary inquiries, and their insistence that conditions in the new industrial cities can be fairly judged only in comparison with those simultaneously existing in the countryside.

In this latter case, the authors have probed one of the weakest points in the conventional economic histories. As humanitarians and city-

dwellers, students of economic development have customarily reacted with indignation to the conditions among the urban poor that they have personally observed or read about in books. Of suffering in the countryside—which has been the lot of the vast majority of mankind through the vast majority of its history—all but a handful of them have been ignorant. In this respect, the work of Hayek and his colleagues is comparable to a book that, for all its differences in economic outlook, has made a surprisingly similar contribution—Sir John Maynard's *The Russian Peasant*, which for the first time approached the problems of the Soviet Union through a consideration of traditions and attitudes among Russia's agrarian masses.

At least one point, however, in *Capitalism and the Historians* remains unproved—the argument that the factory legislation initiated in England in 1833 and gradually copied by all the major industrial nations was unnecessary and even tended to retard the improvement in conditions it sought to effect. Such a statement can be neither disproved nor verified. It is essentially a product of economic faith—in the case of Hayek and his colleagues, a conviction that the modern industrial system contains its own self-correcting mechanism. Most of those who have in fact sought to improve the conditions of labor—trade-union leaders, Fabian and reformist Socialists, and diversified lords ranging from Shaftesbury to Keynes—have been at the very least skeptical of any such pre-established harmony. They have believed—and I confess that I agree with them—that better wages, shorter hours, and the like come about primarily through organized pressure by the workers and the long arm of the state. Hayek and Ashton are quite right in arguing that such reforms cannot be introduced until a new industrial society has acquired some economic “fat” or surplus; but it is not at all clear that they will come about automatically.

THIS is my first major criticism of *Capitalism and the Historians*. My second is related to it. In one of his best sentences Hayek maintains that “the incidence [of suffering] on a small group among a prospering community is probably felt more as an injustice and a challenge than was the general suffering of earlier times which was considered as unalterable fate.” Here he epitomizes the enormous psychological shift from a traditional rural society to a mod-

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ern industrial one. Hayek and Ashton correctly underline this psychological difference in describing the attitude of 19th- and 20th-century historians toward the English factory system. But when they come to the industrial workers themselves, the authors seem to forget that the latter too had minds and souls: in speaking of English factory labor, Hayek and his colleagues assume the cool, mechanistic tone of a Ricardo or a James Mill. They apparently consider it unnecessary to inquire how the workers themselves felt about their new conditions of life and labor. Perhaps these conditions in abstract terms *were* better than those their peasant ancestors had known in the past. But what of the rest—what of the rupture of traditional ties of church, community, family, and age-old practice? Did the industrial workers in any non-material sense feel happier than their ancestors? This is not a plea for sentimentality in the writing of history—Hayek is quite right in arguing that we have had more than enough of that. It is simply a complaint that the authors of *Capitalism and the Historians* have not pushed their own psychological insights far enough—that they have not done for the English factory

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worker what Oscar Handlin in *The Uprooted* did for the peasant immigrant to the United States.

As we have come to know more about the "industrial revolution," we have begun to see that the psychological shock it produced was more profound and prolonged than the economic changes it effected. This shock—and the revolutionary mentality that accompanied it—Hayek and his colleagues have almost totally left out of account.

The Flavor of Galut

YISROEL, THE FIRST JEWISH OMNIBUS.

Edited by JOSEPH LEFTWICH. Beechurst Press. 723 pp. \$6.00.

Reviewed by JUDD L. TELLER

THIS is the American edition of an anthology first published in Britain in 1933. It gathers together short stories—some excellent, some fair, some deplorably amateurish—by 19th- and 20th-century writers of Jewish blood. The editor's emphasis on "blood" accounts for the exclusion of the half-Jewish Marcel Proust and the inclusion of John Cournos, a Jewish convert to Christianity; it also accounts for the grotesque lumping together of Franz Kafka, Arthur Schnitzler, Vicki Baum, Edna Ferber, Waldo Frank, and Anzia Yezierska.

This jumbling of values cannot be excused on the ground that the editor's primary concern is Jewish authenticity and racial and spiritual affinity, not literary merit. Many of these stories, including those by less than minor writers, are not on Jewish themes at all, and Mr. Leftwich concedes that "in presenting this collection of short stories by Jews working in different countries and different languages, I wonder if there really is any unity between them." If this is so, then Mr. Leftwich's taste alone is to blame, and nothing betrays the quality of that taste more clearly than his statement that Anzia Yezierska's fiction on immigrant themes is among the best in a genre "which in many of its practitioners degenerated into crude sob-stuff." It has always been this reviewer's impression that Miss Yezierska is the sob-sister *par excellence* in this genre.

THE editor's claim that his anthology is "on the whole representative and even comprehensive" (although "some writers who ought to

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be in have for technical reasons chiefly been left out") is not warranted. His Yiddish section, for example, has nothing by J. M. Weisenberg, I. J. Singer, or I. Bashevis-Singer, masters of the Yiddish story, but does include that pathetic amateur, Moysheh Oyved, a London antique dealer with a penchant for writing, and Leo Kenig, a dilettante essayist. Singer and Weisenberg did, as a matter of fact, appear in the original, 1933, edition, but were left out of the revised, 1945, one—of which this American edition is a reprint—because of "war-time paper difficulties."

The Hebrew section features Saul Tchernichovsky, who, though ranking with Bialik as a poet, achieved nothing comparable as a writer of prose. Bershadsky, Yosef Chayim Brenner, and the still active Gershon Shofman—all three among the architects of Hebrew fiction—are omitted. The Russian section includes Vladimir Jabotinsky, Zionist leader and versatile writer, but known primarily as a political journalist, not as a writer of fiction. It omits the 19th-century L. Levanda, who was praised by Tolstoy and other eminent Russians, yet was altogether a Jew of Jews. The contemporary Soviet poet and fiction writer Boris Pasternak (whose work has recently been issued by New Directions) is likewise omitted.

One can see the justification for the editor's reluctance to include excerpts from novels, but this was no reason to omit Abraham Cahan. The author of *The Rise of David Levinsky* also produced several long short stories that, on all counts, belong in the American section ahead of Thyra Samter Winslow's peripheral "Jewish work." Herman Bernstein, a dedicated *shtadlan* and a great reporter, is represented by satire, not reportage; Ben Hecht, Dorothy Parker, S. J. Perelman, and the Yiddish satirist Moyshe Nadir, are absent altogether.

It is Mr. Leftwich's stubborn "feeling," which none can challenge, however difficult it may be to understand, that his anthology "as it stands, with all its incompleteness, is an entity, and must remain as such," and that additions—thus the inclusion of writers who

have come into prominence since 1933—"would need an altogether new volume." This is why some of the best fiction produced by American Jewry is missing from the American section.

BUT even if this were a perfect anthology, this reviewer would still take exception to its title, which is pretentious, deceptive, and even offensive. *Yisroel* is a formidable, pregnant word. To append it to a collection of short stories is to suggest that the entire literary genius of the Jewish people has been poured into a single literary genre.

In his well-written, well-informed "foreword," the editor speculates, inconclusively, on what Jewish writing is. Perhaps he should have defined it for himself with greater clarity before assembling his anthology. We would suggest that one quality, at least, characterizes all the important writers of Jewish blood who have no visible roots in the Jewish community, or have been born into a non-Jewish faith: this is the flavor of *galut*, of spiritual dispossession. The term is used here not as Zionists would use it, but as some of the Reform rabbis of an earlier generation did. But in their *galut* these writers carry out Israel's traditional mission amongst the nations as witnesses to and critics of Gentile civilization. Marcel Proust qualifies as a Jew by this test. All truly great writers, whatever their descent, are in *galut* in this deeper sense—not excluded, but self-excluded. The only difference is that a writer who is a Jew or half-Jew may be less than great and yet possess this quality and thus appear to be better than he really is. Arthur Koestler is a case in point. This quality is very real.

Mr. Psychoanalysis

A HISTORY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS IN AMERICA. By CLARENCE P. OBERNDORF. Grune and Stratton. 280 pp. \$5.

Reviewed by

LILLIAN BLUMBERG MCCALL

CONTEMPORARY psychoanalytic prose is a wasteland in which the parched reader falls on quotations from Freud as he would on ice-cold Coca-Cola in the middle of the Sahara. Hundreds of books on psychoanalysis repeat each other endlessly, but seldom offer any new ideas. On the surface, *A History of Psychoanalysis in America* is just another seminarish

retelling of the same old story. But it would be a mistake to stop reading, because Dr. Oberndorf never hesitates to call a spade a spade. An "orthodox" Freudian who has little use for orthodoxy because he thinks people are more important than theories, Dr. Oberndorf is looked upon as something of a gadfly by his more metaphysically oriented colleagues. His book is the soul-searching of a man examining his way of life. Psychoanalysis has been his way of life and no one in America can examine it with more authority—if Robert A. Taft was Mr. Republican, Dr. Clarence P. Oberndorf is Mr. Psychoanalysis.

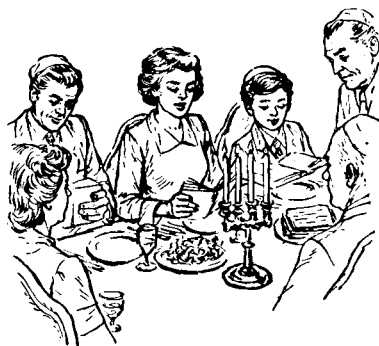
ONE of the first disciples of Freudianism in this country, Dr. Oberndorf learned psychoanalytic technique by rule of thumb before the days of institutes, formal courses, and compulsory training analyses. He was first attracted to psychoanalysis because it offered new hope for the cure of mental disease, and he did not question this fundamental purpose. In 1914, hoping to learn more about the technique of treatment, he had a few unsuccessful "didactic" sessions with Dr. Paul Federn, one of Freud's associates. "I slumped on an uncomfortable sofa while Federn sat beside me. During our hour he would drone two or three times . . . 'I'd say you do have a bit of neurosis.' It seemed to console and reassure him that the analytic sessions were justified. *Up to that time I had not encountered this question of making a justification for analysis, for all the patients who came to me were suffering from urgent and distressing symptoms*" (my italics). He did not, however, seriously question the superiority of psychoanalysis over other methods of psychiatric treatment.

Though loath to give up the idea of a personal analysis, he was still "reluctant to disclose his conscious and unconscious motivations to one of his friends and competitors. 'There is something in the misfortunes of our friends which does not displease us. . . .'" His friends and competitors apparently felt the same way—it was the custom to go to Europe for didactic analysis or to wait for visiting European analysts.

Dr. Oberndorf soon tried analysis again in Zurich, this time with Dr. Alphons Moeder, who "did not seem concerned about the question of neurosis, but concentrated his psychoanalytic endeavor almost exclusively upon dream interpretation, in which he had a repu-

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tation for great skill." The sessions ended abruptly when Dr. Oberndorf returned home because of World War I. These disappointing experiences led to his first doubts about the potentialities of the psychoanalytic method—doubts that had to be resolved. "In . . . twelve years of practice there had been numerous instances in which both the patient and I were content with the results obtained. Very probably I could have continued, as Brill and others did, without submitting to an analysis." Although he was strongly advised against interrupting his flourishing practice, he made the pilgrimage to Vienna in 1921, to be analyzed by Freud. The experience seems to have jolted him—not because anything happened but because nothing happened.

DR. OBERNDORF went to Vienna full of youthful enthusiasm, hoping to improve himself in the arts of healing. He met a tired, sick, disillusioned old man envied by his war-impooverished colleagues more for his rich American students than for his worldwide fame. In describing his analysis with Freud, it is obvious—in spite of the usual pious utterances about the master—that he didn't like Freud and Freud was unimpressed, if not bored, with him. ". . . the Professor remained consistently impersonal in his attitude, and this, I think, may have militated against the development of a feeling of warmth for him." Freud on Oberndorf: "What shall I do with you—you have no neurosis." (Imagine a modern analyst saying this to a patient! When Oberndorf repeated Freud's remark to Dr. Federn years later, Federn exclaimed: "Just think, in those days we knew nothing of character analysis." Nowadays it is not necessary to "justify" an analysis in terms of incapacitating symptoms. You don't have to be incapacitated to be "maladjusted." I have yet to hear of anyone being told he doesn't need analysis. If you have the money it is felt you can always profit by a little psychotherapy.)

Dr. Oberndorf remained in analysis with Freud for 100 hours and seems to have ex-

perienced the classical post-analytic *personal* disappointment with the procedure. This after-effect was described many times in the professional psychological journals of the 1920's. Because most of these accounts were by "academic" psychologists who had submitted to treatment out of intellectual curiosity, they were—and are—largely discounted, although they remain the best methodological criticisms of the psychoanalytic technique yet written. (It is difficult to describe the post-analytic feeling. You expect something from an analysis; you're not exactly sure what it is you do expect. You were damned unhappy when you started; you're still unhappy now that it's over. Most of those annoying or obnoxious personal habits persist. Depending on the kind of person you are, you'll get sore at the analyst, or at the whole business, or at yourself, or just keep on changing analysts. But when it's over you're still the same old you. Anyone who has ever been psychoanalyzed will know what I'm talking about.)

BEFORE he went to Vienna Dr. Oberndorf attributed his therapeutic failures to his own professional shortcomings, not to the limitations of the psychoanalytic method itself. If only he knew more, if only his skills were greater, he could help his patients more. In Vienna he was soon disabused of this notion. "The Viennese masters had not been able to avoid unsatisfactory outcomes any more than the relative novices in New York . . . it proved disquieting to my fond hope that psychoanalysis would invariably and unquestionably benefit appropriate cases." Freud said goodbye to him with the words: "We harbor no hard feelings."

Freud of course had already given up the curative aspects of psychoanalysis and was only interested in it as a theory of human behavior. Dr. Oberndorf still hasn't quit on it. But his Viennese experience led him to question the practical therapeutic value of the rules of the classical procedure that are still regarded as sacred by many psychoanalysts—largely because they are a matter of custom. Freud insisted that a properly conducted analysis necessitated six hourly sessions a week. (The classical procedure in America now calls for five sessions a week—Americans are accustomed to the five-day work week.) Dr. Oberndorf believes that the treatment can be effective with fewer sessions a week. The non-orthodox schools have long since given up the five-times-a-week rule,

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There is at present no evidence to support the contention that five times a week is five times as effective as once a week, or that two years of analysis is twice as efficacious as one.

Dr. Oberndorf is still unconvinced that the famous "couch" is always advisable; he thinks that individual circumstances should determine whether the patient lies down or sits up. On this point, too, as indeed on all aspects of the procedure, there is no evidence pro or con. It is plain, however, that Dr. Oberndorf believes the rules ought to be flexible.

IN DISCUSSING the question of whether or not psychoanalysts should be doctors, Dr. Oberndorf sides with the orthodox Freudians who frown on lay analysis. (Their failure to accredit Theodor Reik, one of Freud's most famous lay associates, is still a source of embarrassment.)

On the point of lay analysis the orthodox Freudians alone are unorthodox. Freud himself was passionate in his conviction that psychoanalysts need not be doctors to be effective either as practitioners or as theoreticians, and was bitter about the stubbornness of the Americans on this question. The Europeans had to give way on the issue of analysis by non-doctors. The Americans were already the most solidly entrenched and highly organized of the psychoanalytic groups. Although they refused to recognize European lay analysts, the Americans did certify some European doctors who did not meet their own *psychiatric* training requirements. Many feel that the opposition of the American Freudians to lay analysis was as much due to economic self-interest as it was to a concern for professional standards. (Let me make clear that I believe *all* psychologists should be licensed. At present any crackpot who feels like it—and many do—can set himself up as a psychotherapist.)

Dr. Oberndorf has been a leading spirit in recent efforts to evaluate the practical results of psychoanalytic treatment. In a particularly revealing passage he conjectures that his early therapeutic successes may have been due more to his own enthusiasm than to the psychoanalytic method itself. Later he quotes a past president of the New York Psychoanalytic Society: "I wish that I might again have the good results with patients which I attained when I did not know so much psychoanalysis." Dr. Oberndorf adds: "Perhaps any procedure, if it becomes too codified, leads to classification,

receipts, and formulas which in turn tend to produce stagnation and routine."

Nowadays it is as hard to think one's way out of psychoanalytic categories as it was for medieval man to think his way into atheism—the climate of psychoanalysis is overpowering. Perhaps for this reason Dr. Oberndorf's book has the effect of a gust of fresh air sweeping through a stuffy room. He obviously intended to reach a professional audience and this fact may partly explain his unusual candor. But Dr. Oberndorf is noted for his candor. While he still believes in the superiority of psychoanalysis over other methods of psychiatric treatment, he is bluntly critical of its present accomplishments—accomplishments which fall far short of original expectations.

If an institution can be said to have a conscience, then Dr. Oberndorf is the conscience of American psychoanalysis.

Existential New Woman

SHE CAME TO STAY. By SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR. World. 404 pp. \$5.00.

Reviewed by WILLIAM S. POSTER

THE furious argument of *The Second Sex*, the first book by Miss de Beauvoir to attract the American public's attention, is directed at the traditional notion of femininity. Every conceivable type of intellectual ammunition is used to riddle it so that it may be replaced by a new one or, rather, by Miss de Beauvoir's version of our old 19th-century friend, the emancipated woman. The beautiful woman, the passionate woman, the mother, the earth-goddess, the whore, the domestic drudge, the woman of "otherness" who is everything that man is not, the woman of "passivity" and "immanence" as contrasted with the "active," "purposeful," "transcendent" male, is to be supplanted by the emancipated, "Existential" woman, able to perform nearly all male tasks, responsible, equipped to conceive goals transcending the human situation and capable of being the arbiter of her own destiny. Once man accommodates himself to this new woman, learns to treat her, to use Miss de Beauvoir's astonishing term, as a "brother," a new and better world of human relations will be achieved.

Miss de Beauvoir's basic premise, it should be realized, is a total acceptance of all male values at par. It is taken for granted that activity,



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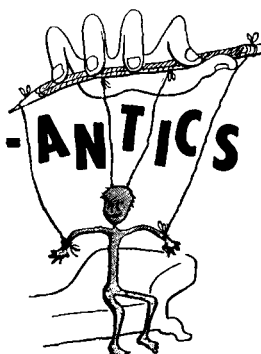
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purposefulness, transcendence are innately superior to passivity and immanence, that man's life is at all times "richer, more satisfying" than woman's. Therefore, while women are offered what amounts to a revolution in character, no change whatsoever is contemplated for the male, although it would seem obvious that you cannot change femininity successfully and leave masculinity untouched. The full emancipation of the female is plainly bound to destroy the male unless he is correspondingly liberated, and he cannot be liberated under any ethical system that takes male values as prime. Paradoxically, *The Second Sex*, precisely by virtue of its acceptance of masculine values, sets the stage for the total deglamorization of the male. Robbed of his uniqueness, all historic novelty closed to him, he becomes a mere relic of the past, as the most dramatic of all possible changes, a change in human nature, becomes a female monopoly.

FITTINGLY, the males of Miss de Beauvoir's present book, a novel published in France some years before her *Second Sex*, are among the most feeble, insignificant characters in all fiction. Presumably, *She Came to Stay* is a "triangle" novel, but, just as the woman in Noel Coward's *Design for Living* is a mere cipher

through which the two males can work out their own relations and conflict with society, so here the male is a pathetic nonentity upon whom the dramatic conflict of the two females is focussed. As the lover of Françoise, who is the incarnation of the new woman, Pierre, the young actor-producer, reveals little but complacency, a weak talent, and a mild vanity which leads to various petty infidelities unaccompanied by passion of any kind. He lacks authority or stature because his work, sex-life, and character contain nothing new, and merely continue an exhausted tradition. Throughout we are given the impression that Françoise is much more serious about Pierre's work than Pierre, and contributes much to it. She controls Pierre's infidelities by consenting to them and thereby appropriating them, while her own infidelity is purely the expression of her own will and therefore actually more male than Pierre's.

The third member of the triangle, Xavière, is an unhappy girl from Rouen whom Françoise drags to Paris, apparently to function as a kind of human toy, or from no motive stronger than a kind of sensory appreciation of the texture of her personality. But Xavière turns out to have an unpredictable strength that is the antithesis of the power of the rational, responsible Françoise. She emerges as the exponent of traditional femininity, capricious, impulsive, and functioning solely in the present out of limitless resources of personal feeling. She transforms the relations of Pierre and Françoise and undermines their mode of life, which depends on ideas and goals rather than feelings. Soon she begins to dominate the group; Pierre and Françoise think about her constantly; Pierre falls in love with her (though all the emotions of the characters are so bizarre, weak, and flickering that it seems cruel to transfix them by common names), but she falls in love with Gébert, a young actor for whom Françoise has a kind of protective affection. Françoise maneuvers to protect her relation with Pierre by destroying his love for Xavière and completes the rout of traditional femininity by seducing Gébert and inducing in him a stronger love for herself than for the hapless Xavière. The latter is reduced to such abject misery that Françoise cannot endure her own sense of guilt and, in a weirdly twisted outburst, demands that Xavière forgive her.

Unforgiven and utterly unable to sustain her burden of guilt, Françoise decides that

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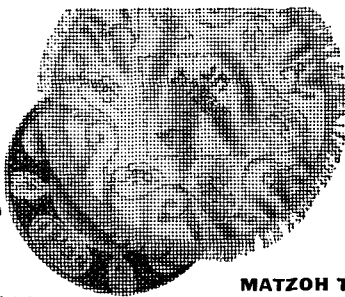
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Xavière is a monster "existing only for herself, entirely self-centered, reducing to nothingness everything for which she has no use; she encompassed the whole world within her own triumphant solitude, boundlessly extending her influence, infinite and unique; everything that she was she drew from within herself, she barred all dominance over her, she was absolute separateness.

"And yet it was only necessary," Françoise meditates, with her hand on the lever of a meter that can release gas into Xavière's room, "to pull down this lever to annihilate her. *Annihilate a conscience* [probably a mistranslation for "consciousness"]! *How can I?* Françoise thought. But how was it possible for a consciousness not her own to exist? In that case, it was she who did not exist. She repeated, *She or I*, and pulled down the lever."

It is rather an easy matter to jeer at the tractarian rigors and burlesque logic of this Existentialist murder, but it is too grim a parable to dismiss. Whereas Miss de Beauvoir's palpable intentions are never quite realized in the narrative, being more often stated than represented, there is a semi-conscious objectivity at work, presenting, often strikingly, the facts and values denied by the theoretic consciousness, and dealing with a real and crucial problem. Thus, from the narrative alone, the most sympathetic character is the Xavière whom the

theory forces into the role of monster. Yet it is also true that pure femininity is, to some degree, destructive and non-viable in a society dominated by rationality and purposiveness. In Miss de Beauvoir's terms and, in all likelihood, in actuality, the slaughter of the Xavière type is inevitable. Sooner or later, her bluestocking, independent sister is bound to deprive her of social power because the new woman has twice as many weapons.

It is a strange creature a century of female emancipation has given birth to. Within the horizons of this work, at least, there is nothing to check her, and the nature of her power is such that the only possible future for it is the accumulation of more power by similar methods. Françoise is, in brief, the totalitarian of human relations, allowing nothing to attain to human significance which she cannot share or control. As the males march off to a war which seems unimportant compared to the epochal battle of the females, it is made plain that if they survive they will return to their former roles, committed to their liaisons with Françoise by a scheme of human relations from which they cannot escape and which allows no new feelings or volitions. Xavière has been lured by Françoise into a world of ambition and purpose she did not wish to enter. When she threatens to become powerful, she is reduced to misery. When she refuses to forgive, she is blamed for the creation of her tor-



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mentor's guilt and then murdered under the shining aegis of a new morality!

It is hard to conceive of a heroine more difficult to justify or even make credible, and it is a considerable tribute to Miss de Beauvoir's literary prowess that, to some degree, she does both. For the most part, the narrative is unencumbered by Existential dialectics and it is with a peculiarly calm, lucid objectivity that she portrays a group of pre-war French intellectuals who seem to have no significant life except in the exploration of novel sensations. It is a bleak, chaotic world that she presents, one in which animal passion is at an absolute ebb, and no ethical or intellectual scheme of sufficient strength is functioning to prevent human behavior from becoming utterly arbitrary and willful. In a milieu where G  bert continually drinks absinthe because he dislikes it, where sex, love, and life itself have all been "liberated" to such a degree that time is atomized and every moment becomes a kind of epicurean problem in multiple choice—in such a milieu any act of integration, however desperate or arbitrary, becomes justifiable and even necessary. Fran  oise is, therefore, genuinely possible as a heroine within her limited environment. It is also true that however unique that environment may or may not be, the chief factors determining it are simply those of all modern civilization. Despite much that is incoherent, then, and despite its logical weaknesses, *She Came to Stay* is a forceful work and one with considerable general significance.

Convincing the Convinced

RACE, JOBS, AND POLITICS: THE STORY OF FEPC. By LOUIS RUCHAMES. Columbia University Press. 255 pp. \$3.75.

Reviewed by HERBERT R. NORTHRUP

MR. RUCHAMES tells the story of the wartime FEPC, from its dramatic beginnings as a means of warding off the Negro "March on Washington" to its death by filibuster. Included in his narrative is the story of the ups-and-downs of the committee; its relations with Congress; its structure and function; an analysis of its achievements; some notes on state laws; and the author's case for a permanent FEPC.

There is no doubt that the story of FEPC lends itself to dramatic treatment by an author with a strong sense of righteousness. The villains who oppose FEPC are on one side, the heroes who are for it on the other; the latter are men of principle, the former are racists. But if one takes this moral-dramatic view of FEPC, then the outcome must be regarded as a failure. Need we regard it that way?

Louis Ruchames is an able writer and a right-minded man. But a social scientist is obliged to paint the entire picture, with all its nuances and gradations, and with fewer stark black-and-white contrasts. He does, for example, bring out the fact that the FEPC was not the best administered agency in the world; but he might have delved further to determine

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whether the blind zealotry of some of its agents did not in fact strengthen the opposition. He accuses opponents of playing politics, and then quotes approvingly from fellow-traveling sources in support of FEPC. The poor selection of sources he uses to support his views, and the lack of evaluation of these sources, are among the most serious defects of the book. The case for FEPC is sound and solid; in time it will prevail; it needs no "bolstering" by people who have always played demagogic politics with minority grievances.

In discussing New York's State Commission Against Discrimination, Ruchames is very critical of the law's administration, but he does not see that the basic problem is one of education and training. SCAD does fair where discrimination is not too deep-seated and patterns of racial employment are not too rigidly defined; but where discrimination is deep-seated and racial employment patterns rigid, SCAD has run into a stone wall.

The parallel with the national scene is obvious, though Ruchames gives little sign of seeing it. Instead of the all-or-nothing approach to FEPC, what seems to me to be needed is some sort of compromise along voluntary lines; this would usher in a period in which some basic educational spadework could be done, so that the real story of FEPC could be carried to those who now oppose it largely be-

cause of ignorance of what it is all about. Let us prepare and work for an FEPC now, by educating the public, and by training minority-group workers to fill skilled jobs, not fritter away all our time by virtuous-sounding but inflexible and unreal demands for its direct enactment in face of a strong and resentful opposition. Their lack of imagination in working out alternative approaches to the problem of discrimination in employment is a prime reason why FEPC proponents regularly get outmaneuvered in the legislative halls.

Louis Ruchames has written an interesting book about an important subject. His book will certainly please all proponents of FEPC. Unfortunately, it will probably not make any impression on those who now oppose, or who will not support, the enactment of such legislation.

Jewish Miniatures

MINIATURES OF EARLY AMERICAN JEWS.

By HANNAH R. LONDON. The Pond-Ekberg Company. 154 pp. \$10.00.

Reviewed by CHARLES REZNIKOFF

HANNAH LONDON is a specialist on the portraiture of early American Jews. This is her third book on the subject. She tells us, in this

book, of those who painted miniatures of early American Jews, of the miniatures themselves, and of those whose pictures were painted. About these she has swallowed a pious fable or two: we are told again of "Captain" Jacob De Leon, with Jacob De La Motta and "Major" Benjamin Nones, carrying General De Kalb, mortally wounded, from the battlefield of Camden; of Rabbi Seixas at the inaugural of Washington; and of Walter Scott with Rebecca Gratz in mind when he was writing *Ivanhoe*.

But Hannah London's contribution to the history of the Jews in this country is the reproduction of the pictures themselves. It is important for a historian to know where the original pictures may be found and who painted them, and the general reader may very well want to see, at a glance, what those whom he may know only as names looked like. In this

book, for example, is the young Rebecca Gratz, as painted by Malbone, an older and Jewish-looking Rebecca Gratz as seen by Anna Peale, gloomy Judah Touro, brooding over his philanthropies, perhaps, and Major David S. Franks of the Continental Army, who had an eye for the ladies. (For that very reason, Thomas Jefferson would not trust him as a diplomat.) It is of interest to find that Franks was extravagant enough to pay seventy-five dollars for this miniature when he was at Valley Forge. But perhaps payment was in continentals.

One of the striking miniatures here reproduced is that of Maurice Levy, also known as Lewis, for a time secretary to Aaron Burr. The miniature, attributed to Ezra Ames, is now owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. But it is not at all certain that Lewis or Levy, despite his name, was a Jew.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

H. STUART HUGHES, author of *Oswald Spengler: A Critical Study*, is in the department of history at Leland Stanford University.

JUDD L. TELLER has written extensively on Zionism and Jewish culture and history. An article by him on modern Yiddish literature will appear in COMMENTARY within the coming months.

LILLIAN BLUMBERG MCCALL has worked as clinical psychologist, industrial psychologist, and employment counselor. Her article "Does Psychoanalysis Cure?" appeared in our issue for November of 1950.

WILLIAM S. POSTER has contributed to the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, *Partisan Review*, and various other magazines.

HERBERT R. NORTHRUP, a labor-relations consultant, is the author of *Organized Labor and the Negro* (1944) and co-author of *The Economics of Labor and Industrial Relations* (1950). He was a consultant to the wartime Fair Employment Practices Committee.

CHARLES REZNIKOFF is well known as a poet, novelist, and historian. His most recent book is *The Jews of Charleston* (1950).

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This *I Believe*

Julian Huxley*

“VALUES appear absolute for two reasons. The first is a result of the structure of language. The very existence of general and abstract terms like true and truth implies that an absolute Truth exists, and also that there is always an absolute difference between truth and falsehood. This, however, is not the case. Truth is only absolute when it deals with the incomplete, such as the abstractions from reality that form the basis of mathematics. The absolute difference between truth and falsehood only applies in a limited number of situations. The fact remains, however, that man's capacity for conceptual thought makes it extremely difficult for him to think in relative terms. The general and the abstract tend, almost automatically, to become invested with the intellectual halo of the absolute. The lesson of science is that this tendency should be resisted. Paradoxically, we find that we are enabled to accumulate a more complete and a more certain store of knowledge when, as in science, we reject the possibility of absolute completeness or absolute certainty, and are prepared to abandon our dearest theories in the face of new facts.

“What holds for truth holds also for beauty and goodness. But in the case of goodness in particular, this predisposition to translate the particular into the general, the general into the abstract, and the abstract into the absolute, is reinforced by another effect—the sense of emotional certitude which in its origin is to be traced to the mental mechanisms growing out of the need for infantile repression. Thanks to repression, it is natural for us not only to think in absolute terms, but to feel in them. The inhibiting influences of the super-ego tend to produce an intolerant assurance of being right, because only through such an assurance could they have succeeded in repressing their opponents into the unconscious. In so far as they succeed, they acquire emotional certitude; and that emotional certitude, given the construction of the human mind, inevitably tends to rationalize itself by claiming absolute value.”

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Expressing his gratitude for this "gift," General Sarnoff called it the first major step in an era of "electronic photography." He said it was only a matter of time, perhaps two years, before the finishing touches would bring this recording system to commercial reality.

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